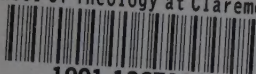
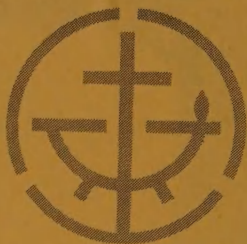


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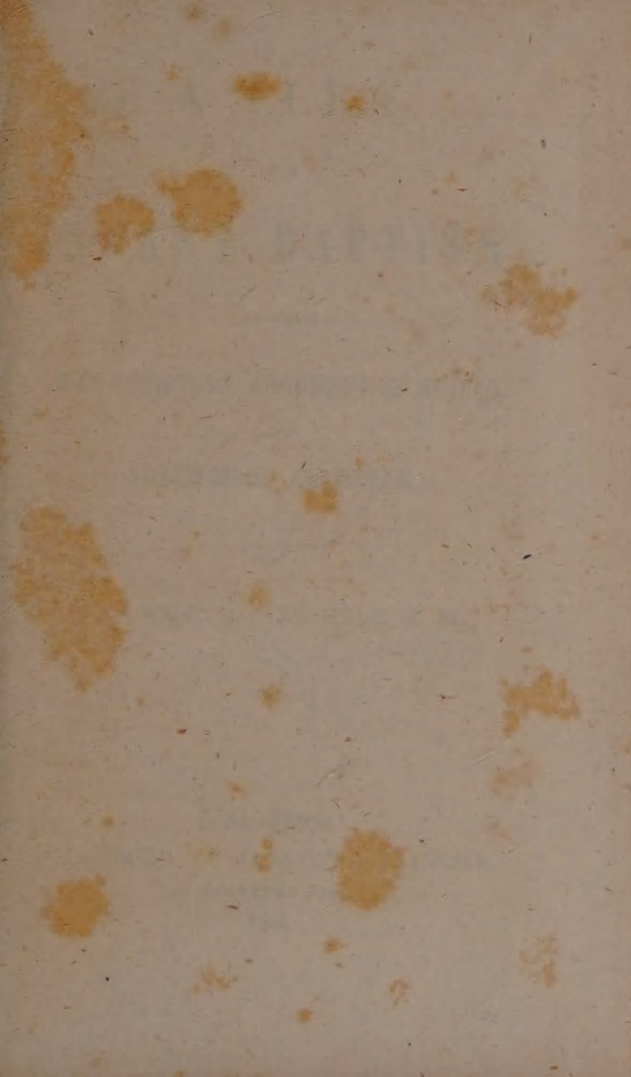


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A PLEA

FOR

INFANT BAPTISM;

IN WHICH

THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT IS STATED,

AND

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

BY REV. MOSES HILL, A. M.

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PREFACE.

THE substance of the following pages was delivered in the form of lectures on the subject of Infant Baptism to a few congregations where a discussion of this question was desired. Some persons who listened to the argument requested me to prepare it for the press, that it might be circulated among the people in a more substantial form. To this request, coming as it did from very respectable sources, I yielded; and as time and other duties would allow, have prepared the following for publication.

The work is larger than I at first intended; but I was unable to discuss the subject with any degree of satisfaction to myself in a less compass. My leading object, both as to plan and style, has been to make the subject plain, and bring it to the understanding of the most common reader. The continuation of the Abrahamic Church into the gospel dispensation is first proved, and then made the basis of the argument for infant bap-

tism. All the Scripture facts, as well as the words of Christ and his apostles, relating to this subject, are to be viewed by the light of this great truth. Then all speak with a clearness for infant baptism which cannot be misunderstood. We have also endeavoured in the discussion of this subject to notice and remove the many alleged difficulties and mysteries which the Baptists have laboured to throw around this question.

This work is principally designed for circulation among the people who have requested its publication, on the bounds of my own field of labour: yet I have avoided giving to the subject anything of a local character, and hope it may not prove uninteresting to any into whose hands it may chance to fall.

MOSES HILL,

FRANKLIN, PA., *March 2, 1854.*

A PLEA

FOR

INFANT BAPTISM.

FOR the better understanding of the reader we present the following as the plan of our argument on this question. The whole subject is embraced in this one proposition.

GENERAL PROPOSITION.

Christian parents should dedicate their infants to God in baptism, as they are members of his Church; and have from the origin, by divine authority, received the same external sign of membership as adults, which sign at the first was circumcision—afterward baptism; while the objections to infant baptism brought by its opponents are groundless.

Perhaps no proposition with the same number of words could be more objectionable to anti-

Pædobaptists, than the above, as it claims divine authority for an ordinance which they most positively reject. No part of it will be admitted; therefore all must be proved. And as the proposition contains a number of distinct ideas, it will be necessary to divide it, and consider each separately.

We have then the following affirmations:—

I. Infants are members of the Church.

II. Infants from the origin of the Church have received, by divine authority, the same external sign of their membership as adults; which sign at the first was circumcision, and afterward baptism.

III. The objections to infant baptism, brought by its opponents, are groundless.

These points being sustained, it follows that Christian parents should dedicate their children to God in baptism.

I. *Infants are members of the Church.*

The word Church in the Scriptures has both a specific and general meaning. It sometimes points out a particular congregation,—as in 1 Cor. xiv, 23, “If therefore the whole *Church* be come together into one place.” So also of the Churches in Asia. This word has also a general

meaning, and in this sense applies to God's universal Church on earth. In this sense it is used in Eph. i, 22, "And gave him to be the head over all things to the *Church*." Col. i, 24, "For his body's sake, which is the *Church*." Matt. xvi, 18, "On this rock will I build my *Church*." The Church in this sense embraces all on earth who belong to Christ. For the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. When we speak of infants belonging to the Church, we do not mean that they belong to the Church in A. or to the Church in B.—not to this branch or that branch of the Church, but to God's universal Church, which is built upon the rock—which is the body of Christ, and over which Christ is in all things the head. To this Church infants belong, and should be acknowledged by all the disciples, as they were by the Lord, as belonging to the kingdom of heaven. Nor do we mean when we say infants belong to the Church, that they are responsible members, or active members; but we mean that God has made them to compose a part of his Church on earth, and has given them the external sign of their membership. A family is composed of adults and infants; but the infants are not labourers, or counsellors; yet who will say that the infant in the cradle is not as much a

member of the family as the young man labouring in the field? He has the same common name, the same right of food and raiment, and also an equal right in the inheritance. Why, then, as the Church is called a household and family may we not allow infants to belong to the family of God? A state is composed of adults and infants: but infants bear no state burdens—they perform no state duties; and yet they receive all the advantages of government. They are numbered in the state census—have the right of protection and support, and their right of inheritance is secured to them by law. The Church is called a kingdom. And are there no infants in the kingdom of God? Our Lord answers, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” But the doctrine of infants in the Church is so vigorously opposed by all classes of the Baptists that the proposition must be supported by direct proof. We will, therefore, inquire into the origin of God’s visible Church to see if the lambs composed a part of his flock, and in another place if they received the same common mark.

And surely this cannot be a difficult task; for an event involving such important interests to the world as the formation of God’s Church on earth must be marked in such a manner as to clearly point out the period when it was done.

That God has a Church on earth, all admit. And that it took its visible form at some particular time, all must agree. When this period was, and who composed its membership, are questions of great importance to the subject of infant baptism. The Pædobaptists are unanimous in fixing the time of the Church organization in the days of Abraham. But the opponents of infant baptism all agree in denying this, but disagree among themselves as to the time it was organized. But feeling themselves bound to point out the time when the visible Church was formed, inasmuch as it really exists, with its ordinances of religion, one fixes on this period, another on that. One class of Baptist writers regards the day of Pentecost as the time of its commencement. A Mr. Frey, a Baptist writer, after labouring for pages to show that the Church was not organized in the days of Abraham, says he agrees with the learned Mr. Pierson, in fixing it on the day of Pentecost. To this we answer, It is a very easy thing to make a declaration, but quite another thing to produce the evidence. The day of Pentecost, we know, was a great day for the Church—a great revival, and many converted. But that the Church of God was organized on that day there is not the least shadow of evidence. There is as much evidence of a Church before the

day of Pentecost, as after. The three thousand converted on that day were *added*. Added to what? We always supposed to the Church. But if no Church existed, how could they be added to it? But allow the Church an existence, and its ministers there present, nothing would be more natural, than that men, when they were soundly converted to God, would join his Church.

Again. It would be well for those Baptists that hold this view of the subject to inquire how this bears on John's baptism. For as baptism is *their* door into the Church, it certainly would look a little singular for John to baptize all Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan, into the Church three years before the Church was formed. But the sacrament also was administered by our Lord some fifty days before the Pentecost. Does not this look a little singular, that an ordinance of the Church is at least fifty days older than the Church?

But this claim rests on so weak a foundation that many of the Baptists have feared to light upon it, and therefore have turned away from the day of Pentecost to find a more favourable period as the time of the Church's formation.

Another class of Baptist writers look to the days of John the Baptist as the beginning of the

Church. Mr. Robinson, a celebrated English Baptist, was of this opinion. And many, I believe, receive his views. Now if this view is correct, the former view must be wrong, for nothing is more certain than that the Church of God did not begin to exist at both these periods. Both cannot be true; both may be false. One we have shown so to be; let us look at the other.

What evidence is there that the Church of God was formed in the days of John? I know of none. But the Church must have begun at some time, and it will not answer the Baptist cause to allow it to have begun in Abraham's time, for then infants would be members of the Church, just as our proposition declares. So they seek the origin of the Church in the different revivals with which God has favoured his Zion. There was a revival in John's day; hence some fix that as the origin of the Church. But unfortunately for this claim, we find a Church before John's day. For St. Stephen, speaking of Moses, (Acts vii, 38,) said, "This is he that was in the *Church* in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Here then is a Church many years before John. But it is objected that the Greek *ἐκκλησία* is from the verb *ἐκκαλέω*, which means

simply to call out; and therefore the Church of St. Stephen was not necessarily a religious body, but may have been a carnal assembly. To this we reply: the classics apply this word, ἐκκλησία, to promiscuous assemblies; and it is also true that when the Greek language was applied to religious ideas, this word was used by Christ and his apostles to point out a religious assembly. And it is used but a very few times in the New Testament in any other sense. The word has a classic and a religious meaning. How then did St. Stephen use it? That he used it in its religious sense, the character of the assembly to which he applied it will clearly show.

The angel that was there with Moses and the people was the Lord himself: for he said to Moses, "See thou tempt him not, for he will not forgive your trespasses." "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Moses and Aaron were in this Church, Joshua and Caleb were in this Church. There they had religious service and holy ordinances. There received they the lively oracles of God. These people, with God in their midst, as their guide and lawgiver, with holy ordinances and with religious service, St. Stephen calls a *Church*. We leave for the reader to say whether it was a religious body or a carnal assembly.

Some of the Baptists have seen the fallacy of the

claim for John's day as the origin of the Church, and have moved it back to the time of Moses. This is a more recent view. But they are not far enough back yet. It is to be hoped that the next move made by our Baptist friends will take them back to the days of Abraham.

But the design of this last move is too manifest to need many remarks. If the organization of the Church of which St. Stephen speaks can be made to consist in the giving of the ceremonial law, and the appointing of the Jewish ritual, then, when these passed away, the organization ceased, and the Church was destroyed. And though infants were members of the Church then, they may not be now. It seems very difficult indeed for the opponents of infant baptism to find the origin of the Church. They light on many different points in the history of the Church as the time of its origin; yet there is one period they all seem studiously to avoid, and that is the time when God said to "Abraham, I will be a God to thee and thy SEED after thee."

But to the third view of the Baptists. Did the Church begin with Moses? If so, where is the evidence? If it is answered, "Moses gave unto you circumcision;" we reply, "Not because it was of Moses, but of the fathers." John vii, 22. If it be said, "The law was given by Moses;" we

reply with Paul, "The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul the covenant." "The law was added because of transgression." Added to what? Here is an organization four hundred and thirty years before the law; and the law is said to be after it,— "added" to it, and it could not disannul it. It certainly shows there was something even before the law too sacred to be destroyed. "Touch it not," says God, "for there is a blessing in it." The law was added for a limited season—"until the Seed should come;" and for a specific purpose—"to bring us to Christ;" and as this law was added "until the Seed should come," so "Christ was the end of the law for righteousness' sake." But had God no Church until Moses? Why then does he call them "my people?" I have heard the groaning of "my people;" "Saw my people." He also speaks of them as a father of a child, and says, "My son." There is as much evidence of a Church before Moses as after Moses. After Moses there was a congregation; so there was before Moses. After Moses they had ordinances; so they had before. After Moses they worshipped God in the use of his appointed means; so they did before. Moses recognised the ordinances that were in the Church before his time: "Moses gave unto you circumcision, *not because*

it was of Moses, but of the fathers," (John vii, 22,) even of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

To Abraham's day, then, we must go for the origin of God's visible Church. There is the record of the whole affair, beginning with the twelfth and ending with the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. To this point all the learned Pædobaptist writers refer for its origin; and although the Baptists deny this, they know not where else to place it.

It may be asked here, Had God no people until Abraham? I answer, Yes, as individuals, but not as a Church. As individuals, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah worshipped God, and preached righteousness. But until Abraham's day there was no Church formation, with rules of government, and sign of Church membership, and holy covenant that bound the great God on his part to "be a God to them, and their seed after them," and on their part to keep his covenant of circumcision. Paul calls Abraham "the father of the faithful," "the father of all that believe." Now in what sense was he the father of all that believe? Surely he was not the first believer; for Abel, Enoch, and Noah believed long before he was born. But allow him to be the first in the visible Church, and the difficulty vanishes away. For if he were first in the Church, and the cove-

nant made with him, and all believers come into his family, he could with the greatest propriety be called the father of the family, or the father of the faithful. In this sense the passage is plain. But reject this view, as the Baptists do, and what does the apostle mean? Will some learned Baptist explain the apostle's meaning?

The history of the organization of the Church is easily stated. When Abram was seventy-five years old the Lord said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:—And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." In answer to this call, Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their substance, and went into the land of Canaan. Years after God met him again, and said, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." At this time God showed him the boundaries of the land of Canaan; and entered into a solemn covenant with him, that he and his seed should have it in possession; and also gave him his son Isaac by promise. But when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared unto him again, and declared himself as the Almighty God, and commanded Abram to walk before him

and be perfect. God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, "and he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness." And God said, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy *seed* after thee; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." "And this is my covenant," or the sign of my covenant: "Every man-child among you shall be circumcised;" "and he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you;" and the "uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people." And God blessed Sarai, and changed her name to Sarah. Then Abraham prayed for Ishmael, and the Lord heard him, and he blessed Ishmael also, and then went up from talking with Abraham. Then Abraham arose and was circumcised, and Ishmael the self-same day. And Isaac, also, was circumcised at eight days old, according to the covenant. The work was done; and God had a people, separated from the world. The mustard-seed was planted; the leaven was in the meal; and from that day until now God has had a visible Church on the earth. And as our proposition declares, we find infants members of this Church.

(2.) But the opponents of infant baptism meet this view by saying, that God made two covenants with Abraham: the one in the twelfth of Genesis,

a covenant of grace; the other in the seventeenth of Genesis, a covenant of circumcision—which related wholly to temporal blessings. The design of this is to make the organization which took place in Abraham's family, in which infants were embraced, and of which circumcision was the sign, to be merely a civil or political compact. What God said to Abraham in the twelfth chapter they claim as the covenant of grace, and as wholly spiritual, and involving no organization at all. And what, therefore, we claim as the origin of God's spiritual Zion is regarded by the Baptists as a political compact, and circumcision as a mark of national distinction and a pledge to the land of Canaan.

If we ask, Why separate the covenant which God made with Abraham into two? the true answer, perhaps, is, To evade infant baptism. For if that organization cannot be shown to be carnal, infants are members, by divine command, of a spiritual compact with the same sign of membership as adults. We object to this separation, for it leaves the covenant of grace without any sign at all; for the sign is set to the covenant in the seventeenth chapter. It may be said, The promise of God is sufficient. This we might grant. But we ask, Why was it not sufficient without the sign when the land of Canaan was under consideration? When God promised salvation to the

world through Abraham, according to the Baptist view, he bound himself neither by sign or seal. But when he would give Abraham a little land in Canaan, he then entered into a contract, and secured it by his seal! Perhaps the reader believes this! I am aware that the Baptists claim that nothing but spiritual blessings are mentioned in the twelfth chapter, and nothing but temporal blessings are mentioned in the seventeenth chapter. But this certainly is a mistake: for in the twelfth chapter God speaks of the "land which I will show thee," which all must admit refers to the land of Canaan; and in the seventeenth chapter he promises to "be a God to thee and thy seed after thee." This embraces spiritual good.

We understand, then, the covenant to be one, beginning with the twelfth, and being perfected in the seventeenth chapter. But if this view should be incorrect, the covenant called the covenant of circumcision is most certainly a spiritual covenant, and the compact organized in this covenant was a spiritual assembly—a religious body. Leaving then, with these remarks, the question of the number of the covenants, let us look at the character of the covenant of circumcision, and of the compact organized thereby. This covenant was sealed by circumcision. If circumcision was

a spiritual ordinance, then the covenant of which it was the seal must have been a spiritual covenant; or Christ and Belial may be united, and he that believeth may have fellowship with an infidel: for God has united a spiritual ordinance with a carnal covenant. This will not do. The Scriptures forbid it. For if the first fruit (which is the circumcision) be holy, the lump (which is the covenant) is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches,—the compact built on this spiritual foundation. So by a Scriptural mode of reasoning, if we find circumcision to have been a spiritual ordinance, the covenant was spiritual, and the Church established thereon was spiritual also. The Scriptures must determine the character of circumcision. “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Rom. iv, 11.

Perhaps in no scripture is the ordinance of baptism shown so clearly to be spiritual, as is circumcision in this passage: “Abraham believed God, and he counted it to him for righteousness.” And he received circumcision as a seal of this triumphant “faith which worked by love and purified the heart.” “The Lord counted it to him for righteousness,” and circumcision was its external seal.

An ordinance divinely appointed to seal the righteousness of faith must be a spiritual ordinance. Circumcision was so appointed, for such a seal; therefore circumcision was a spiritual ordinance. Further: that covenant, sealed and signed by a spiritual ordinance, must also be a spiritual covenant. The covenant of circumcision was so sealed and signed; therefore the covenant was a spiritual covenant. It follows, also, that an organization established on a spiritual covenant, and having a spiritual ordinance as a sign and seal, must have been a spiritual organization or compact. The body organized in the family of Abraham, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, had such an ordinance. Therefore that organization was a spiritual, or religious body.

I insert these deductions here, as they follow every passage that shows the religious character of circumcision.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Two things are here stated by the Apostle: First, That the true circumcision was not outward

in the flesh. Now if circumcision was only a mark of national distinction, or a pledge to the land of Canaan, and not a spiritual ordinance, it certainly was outward, and only outward,—in the flesh, and only in the flesh. The Baptist view disputes Paul directly in this part of the text. He says secondly, that circumcision is “of the heart,” “in the spirit.” How can this be, unless it had a spiritual character? How was it of the heart, only as it represented the work of grace in the heart? How could it be of the spirit, only as it was the sign of a spiritual work? To say that circumcision was a carnal ordinance—a mere business transaction—as do the opponents of infant baptism, is to make the Apostle Paul, in the above text, talk the most egregious nonsense ever attributed to mortal man. But to allow circumcision to have been an outward sign of an inward grace, as baptism now is allowed to be, and the above text is a clear and forcible presentation of its true character. Here, then, we have the circumcision of the Abrahamic Church a spiritual ordinance, working in the spirit, and belonging to the heart. But the ordinance being spiritual, the covenant which it seals must be spiritual. And the ordinance and the covenant being spiritual, the Church founded thereon must be spiritual also. Hence we have God’s spiritual Zion

in the house of Abraham, and infants composing a part of its membership. "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Rom. ii, 25.

The religious character of circumcision is clearly seen in this passage, for it bound to the observance of God's law. Its advantages were realized only by those who kept the law; and to him who broke the law, his "circumcision was made uncircumcision." Certainly not literally so. And if this ordinance was only a mark of national distinction, the profane carried the mark as well as the pious. How, then, did a violation of the law destroy circumcision? The answer is easy: circumcision was a seal of faith. But one might have the outward seal without the inward grace. The breakers of the law had not the faith, and therefore their circumcision was of no advantage.

From this text also, is clearly seen the spiritual character of this ordinance. But the ordinance being spiritual, the covenant was also spiritual; and the Church established thereon must have been spiritual. And of this Church infants composed a part, and received this spiritual ordinance as a sign of their membership. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there

of circumcision? Much every way : chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. iii, 1, 2.

This passage very clearly shows the religious character of this ordinance. Whatever temporal advantage it secured, this was not its chief design. "Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." What had circumcision to do with the oracles of God, if it was a profane ordinance? But being a religious ordinance,—a seal of faith, and sign of Church relation,—it bound them to the obedience of God's law. And God, in remembrance of his covenant, gave unto them his "lively oracles."

Thus we see, again, circumcision to be a religious rite—a spiritual ordinance. But the covenant must then be spiritual, and the Church established thereon, spiritual also. Let the reader bear in mind that infants were members of this spiritual Church, and received this spiritual sign.

Let us look also at Gal. v, 2: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." This was addressed to the Church who had already received Christ as the Saviour crucified and risen from the dead; and for such to receive circumcision, was to reject Christ, for "Christ shall profit you nothing." How is this, if circumcision was only a mark

of national distinction? All nations, tongues, and people have a right to the merits of the Lord Jesus. But here is an ordinance, or mark, which, if received since Christ has made his appearance, rejects him altogether, and deprives us of his saving power. In some important sense, then, this ordinance must have related to Christ.

What, then, is the true meaning of this text? The answer is easy. Circumcision was an ordinance in the Abrahamic Church which looked forward to the coming of Christ. It was prospective in its character. Abraham received it as a seal of his faith. Faith in what? That in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed—faith in Christ to come; and all who received circumcision said thereby, The Saviour has not yet made his appearance, but we look for his coming. So to receive it now, is to deny that Christ has come. In this sense the Jews receive it to this day. Of necessity, therefore, there must be a change in the ordinance; but we will speak more of this in another place. If the circumcision of Timothy by the apostle should be thought inconsistent with this view, we have only to remark, that was done by the apostle on the ground of expediency, to accommodate the prejudices of the Jews, and in no sense according to the ancient law of circumcision. In any other sense would

the practice of the apostle be inconsistent with his precepts. Here, then, in another text **have** we the religious character of this ordinance implied in the most forcible manner. It stood as a religious rite in the Church pointing to a coming Saviour, until the Lord Jesus made his appearance ; then it gave way to another suited to the gospel dispensation.

But that the reader may further see the religious character of this ordinance, we refer to Deut. xxx, 6 : " And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Also to Jer. iv, 4 : " Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." See also Col. ii, 10, 11 : " Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power : in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

In what sense, we ask, is circumcision used in the above passages ? All must admit in a religious sense. But how could the apostle so apply it if it had no such meaning ? It here points out a clean heart—to love the Lord with all the heart and soul. It signifies here to be complete in

Christ,—“to put off the body of the sins of the flesh.” The plain meaning of these scriptures is simply this. The sign is used for the thing signified. Circumcision was the sign of the righteousness of faith, or of a clean heart; and it is here used to represent this inward work. The Jews understood it, and so did the Christians addressed by the apostle. So universally understood was this ordinance as a religious rite, and its design as a sign of righteousness so acknowledged, that the whole religious character was involved in a command to be circumcised. Circumcision, then, being proved to be a spiritual ordinance in the Church, and a sign and seal of the covenant, the covenant must also be a spiritual covenant; and the Church established on this covenant must be a spiritual Church: or else we have a carnal Church, with a spiritual ordinance, standing on a spiritual foundation,—which is absurd. But infants were members of this spiritual Church, and received the same spiritual sign of their membership in common with adults.

(3.) That this Church, organized in Abraham’s family, composed of adults and infants, and both receiving the same sign of membership, was the spiritual Church of God, we further show from the *care* which God had over it; from the *love* he had for it; and from his *relation* to it.

See *his care*. "When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Psalm cv, 13-15. The Lord fed this Church in the wilderness forty years on manna. He gave them water from the rock. He opened the sea and Jordan for their pathway. Their clothes waxed not old; and he led them with "a cloud by day, and fire by night."

"Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all." "So will I do," saith God. Do what? Not destroy this Church—this Abrahamic Church with infants; for there is a blessing in it. Has God then cast away his people? God forbid.

Balaam, speaking of this Church, said: "How shall I curse whom the Lord hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?" "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel." "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." "It shall be said of Israel, What

hath God wrought!" Num. xxiii, xxiv. Thus spoke the wicked Balaam when for a price he would have cursed this Church. But God maintained the right of his people. What more especial care has God ever exercised over the Church in the gospel dispensation, than he did in days of old?

But see *his love*. "He exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, *a people near unto him*." Psa. cxlviii, 14. How *near* unto him? So near that he *loved* them, and "suffered no man to do them wrong." "He remembered his covenant, and their father Abraham."

"When Israel was a child, then I *loved* him, and called my *son* out of Egypt." Hosea xi, 1. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?" Verse 8. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." Chap. xiii, 9.

"I will heal their backsliding, I will *love* them *freely*: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree."

The Lord loved his ancient Church as strongly as his Church in latter days; for he has made no

stronger declarations of love for his Church now, than he did then. But this same Church that God loved so well had infants in it, and they received the same sign of their membership as adults.

But see *his relation to this Church*. Look first at the relation of *God* to his *people*. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii, 7. "And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Jer. xxx, 22. As the people of God, they were bound to love him with all the heart, and to worship him in the beauty of holiness. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Who could love God more than he required of his ancient Church? This relation involved not only love, but *obedience*. And God said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." Deut. xxix, 9.

It is said by the opponents of infant baptism that this Church was only a political organization, resting on a carnal covenant. In what sense, then,

were they God's people? And how are we to understand the Lord when he says, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God?" In a general sense he is the God of all nations, tongues, and people; but in a special sense was he the God of the Jewish Church, and they in an equally special sense were his people. Hear them as they sing, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, bring an offering and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." In what age of the Church could they do more? Or of whom was more required? "And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel forever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord." 1 Chron. xvi, 35, 36.

It would be difficult to find a scene described either in the Old Testament or the New, more devotional, and even spiritual, than was this worship offered to God by his Old Testament Church. Every heart seemed interested: "And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord."

Infants were in this spiritual Church, and received the same external sign of membership as the adults.

The Abrahamic Church is represented as the

bride, the spouse of God. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Jer. iii, 14. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Isa. lxii, 5. "Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away?" Isa. l, 1.

These scriptures are sufficient to show that God acknowledged this near and sacred relation to the Jewish Church. So he does also to the Christian Church. And it would be well for the opponents of infant baptism, before they separate the Jewish and the Christian Church into two distinct organizations, and make the Christian Church the Lamb's wife, to find a bill of divorce from the Church of Abraham. And this divorce should be made very clear, both for the honour of God, and the honour of his Church. And it might be prudent for the Baptists to say but little against either the moral or religious character of the Abrahamic Church, lest they should offend the *Husband* by speaking evil of his *bride*. All antipædobaptists deny that the Jewish Church was a religious compact. They call it a carnal assembly. Then God was married to a carnal assembly. And so of all the titles they give this Church. Whatever they say of it, they say of the spouse of God. But in this Church, to which

God was married, were infants who received circumcision, the same sign of membership as adults. If this Church is still his bride—and we have not heard of her death or divorce—why not give the infant still the same sign as the adult? They received it at first. When were they cut off, and by whose authority? Let our Baptist friends look well to the answers of these questions. They may at some period be called upon for the lambs of the flock; and it will not do to say with Cain, “I am not my brother’s keeper;” for Christ not only said, “Feed my sheep,” but also, “Feed my *lambs*.”

(4.) That the Church of God began in Abraham’s family is further evident, as they had the same gospel preached unto them that is preached now unto us. “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the *gospel unto Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Gal. iii, 8. That this was the true gospel none can doubt, as Paul speaks of it as such, and it refers to Christ—the subject of all gospel preaching—as the blessing of the world. But what had the preaching of this gospel to Abraham to do with the justifying of the heathen? Very much. It took Abraham into covenant relation with God, as the first in his visible Church; and through

the instrumentality of this Church it was to be preached to the heathen. They were to come into its sacred enclosure, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and there be blessed with faithful Abraham. For Isaiah says of the Jewish Church : " The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Chap. lx, 3. " For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them : but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Heb. iv, 2. Here again is the same gospel to the Abrahamic Church as is preached unto us. If it be objected that it did not profit them, the answer is, It was for want of faith in them that heard it. And this shows clearly that the gospel of the Jewish Church was the same with our own, for it did not profit without faith. It does not now. He that believeth not shall be damned. If the Jews were not saved, it was no fault of the gospel, but for want of faith in its promises. They rejected the gospel. If the gospel is the spiritual power of the Church now, was it not then ? If it prepares persons for fellowship with God and his people now, did it not then ? Who can deny that the Church of old, enjoying the blessed gospel of God, built on a spiritual covenant, owned of God as his bride, and having a divinely-appointed

sign of membership,—who, I ask, can deny that this Church was the spiritual Zion of God? But in this Church, with this gospel, infants were members, with the same sign of membership as adults.

(5.) That this Church was the true Church of God is further evident, as it enjoyed the presence of Christ, and was under his control. “This is he that was in the *Church* in the wilderness with the *Angel* which spake to him in the Mount Sina.” The Angel is Jesus Christ. He appeared to Moses in the bush. He had power to forgive sins, which none but God in Christ can do. He was the Prophet which Moses said should “afterward be raised up.” Acts vii. Of this same angel it is said, Exod. xxiii, 21, “Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not *pardon* your transgressions: for *my name is in him*.” Here is Christ with the name of the great God, not given to him, *but it was in him*.

Paul, speaking of the Jewish Church, says: “They eat spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” 1 Cor. x, 3, 4. “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.” Christ was then in the

Jewish Church, as he is in the Church at the present day. He was there to pardon sins, to give them spiritual meat and drink. He was there to correct, to punish offenders. Thus they fell, as a warning to us, who tempted him. But in Christ's Church in the wilderness, of which he, as now, was the head, were infants with the same sign of membership as adults.

(6.) The religious character of the Abrahamic Church is further seen in the fact, that they were justified and saved by faith. "The just shall live by faith." Hab. ii, 4. "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. iv, 3. The examples of triumphant faith selected by Paul are chiefly from the Abrahamic Church: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph and Moses, Gideon, Samson and David, with the prophets. And in his letter to the Romans (chap. ii) Paul represents some of the Jews as being broken off from this Church for their unbelief. In adults then, faith was required, and for want of faith some were cut off. Cut off from a carnal assembly for want of faith! Cut off from a political body because of unbelief! The idea is ridiculous. And yet all this is said of the Church of Abraham, by the opponents of infant baptism. But infants were in this Church where faith was a condition

of membership, and received the same sign of membership as adults.

(7.) The religious character of the Abrahamic Church is further seen in the fact, that God required of them purity of life, and holiness of heart. "The Lord said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Gen. xvii, 1. What more did God require of an apostle? "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. vi, 4, 5. What more does God require of the Christian Church? And God said concerning these commands, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." They not only circumcised their children in the Abrahamic Church, but they taught them everywhere the holy commandments of God. Would that the Christian Church were as faithful. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx, 6. "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore *sanctify* yourselves, and ye

shall be *holy* ; for I am holy." Lev. xi, 44. "I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be *holy*, for I am holy." Verse 45.

These quotations could be multiplied to almost any length ; but these are sufficient. They show that God required the highest degree of Christian perfection of his Jewish Church—perfection that required every grace of the Spirit to accomplish, as much then as now—*holiness*, sanctification, love, faith, purity.

We shall end this part of the argument here. We have dwelt long upon it ; and our only apology is, that no part of the argument for infant baptism is more vigorously opposed by the Baptists than the spiritual character of the Abrahamic Church. But we think this character is clearly secured to it in the scriptures above quoted. At least we have not seen even a plausible explanation of them on any other ground. And it is evident that the Baptists have felt the force of such scriptures, and therefore have endeavoured to show that whatever there was of the Abrahamic Church, it passed away at the coming of Christ, and that our Lord formed a new one in its place, in which children had no place as members. In support of this claim, they quote from Heb. viii, 7, 8 : "For if that first covenant had been

faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." In showing that this scripture in no sense affects the Abrahamic Church, it is only necessary to inquire what the apostle means by the "first covenant." And in this the apostle is very explicit, as he tells when and where it was made. It was made, as is seen in the ninth verse, "when God took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." What Paul calls the "first covenant," with which fault was found, refers to the law given by Moses, which was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was made with Abraham. This law was added because of transgression, for a specific purpose,—“To bring us to Christ;” and for a limited period,—“Until the Seed should come.” That Seed was Christ; hence Christ was the end of the law for righteousness’ sake. And the apostle says, “The law, which was added four hundred and thirty years after the covenant, could not disannul it.” But Paul also speaks of a new covenant made with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. This is described in the tenth verse of this chapter, and is a renewal of the promise made to

Abraham : "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people"—the very words of the Abrahamic covenant. So far, then, from this passage overthrowing the Abrahamic Church, it confirms the covenant on which it stands. The addition of the law to the covenant "could not disannul it," neither could its removal overthrow it.

It is further claimed by the opponents of infant baptism, that great changes took place at the coming of Christ, and that the Christian Church differs very much in its outward appearance from the Jewish. This is cheerfully admitted. But we are to "judge not by appearances." The removal of the law of ceremonies could not but produce this change. But we are to remember the words of Paul, "The law could not disannul the covenant." Great changes could take place in the Church, as in other things, without destroying its identity. A lady changes her apparel; she appears very differently; but is she not the same lady? The Church is the "Lamb's wife;" at his coming she put on her strength, and her "*beautiful garments*." There is a change from early dawn to midday, both as regards light and heat; but is it not the same day? The Church "looks forth as the morning." There is also a great change from infancy to age, both as regards knowledge and strength; but is the identity of

the person destroyed? The Church is the body of Christ. A house is newly furnished; it appears very differently; but is it not the same house? The Church is the house of God; and its members, his family. We shall speak more definitely of these changes in another place, and show that they, so far from overthrowing the Jewish Church, give their testimony in favour of infant baptism.

But as it is claimed by the Baptists that the Abrahamic Church, with its infant members, passed away at the coming of Christ, we deem it proper to present the reader with another class of scriptures which shall clearly show that the holy men of old, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," had no such idea,—that such a thought never entered into their minds. Hear the prophets, then, speak of God's Zion, in which infants were received as members by the same external sign as adults: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the

Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Isa. lxii, 1-3.

Here is an expression of ardent love and zeal for the Jewish Church. That she should be overthrown by the great Builder himself, as the opponents of infant baptism say, could not have been in the prophet's mind.

Her righteousness—her righteous doctrines and precepts—must go forth, unmixed with error, as clear as *brightness*, and fill the earth with her salvation as a lamp that burneth—to give *light* and *heat* to those in darkness and the shadow of death.

The Gentiles are now seeing her righteousness, and all kings are now witnessing her glory. Has not the Jewish Church already received her new name, *Christian*? Does she not already appear as a royal diadem in the hand of God?

But the prophet sings on: "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, (whose light?) and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (Upon whom?) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The glory of the Abrahamic Church is not to be tarnished. Her light is not to grow dim. "But the Gentiles shall see it from afar, and shall come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

But as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have their infants with them, may not the Gentiles bring theirs?

But further still, Isaiah (xxxiii, 20) says: "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." I say, then, has God cast off his people? God forbid. "Think not," said our Lord at his coming, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matt. v, 17.

But what does Isaiah mean by Zion and Jerusalem? Certainly not the literal city of Jerusalem, for then his prophecy would be false; for long ago that was taken down. He means the Church—the Church of which he was a member; and which he loved. God gave him to see that this Church should rise and conquer, and be quiet—"A tabernacle that should not be taken down." What do the opponents of infant baptism say to this? Will it be "taken down?" "Not one stake shall be removed." Was infant membership with the same sign as adults, one of the stakes of the old Church constitution? Yes: "Unto thee and thy seed." "Isaac shall be cir-

cumcised." This "shall not be broken." Neither shall one cord be unloosed. All shall remain as of old. The cords may be lengthened for the Gentiles, and the stakes spread for the world : but they shall not be broken. Those persons know not the Scriptures who say that Christ came to destroy this Church. So far from coming to destroy it, he came to save it—to purify it. Malachi, the last of the prophets, speaks clearly on this point : "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the *covenant*, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Mal. iii, 1-4.

In this quotation is clearly seen the work of the Messiah in the Jewish Church—to refine—to separate the gold from the dross. To purify the sons, and not to destroy, was his work. Nor yet was it to destroy their offerings, but rather to make them pleasant unto the Lord ; as they

were in days of old, even in the days of Abraham and Isaac. Thus, even to the last of the prophets, there is no intimation of the destruction of the Abrahamic Church. This doctrine was not among the prophets. Let us see if it was taught by the Lord or his apostles.

“Other sheep I have, (said our Lord,) which are not of this fold: them also I must bring;—and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” John x, 16.

What did our Lord mean by this fold? A fold means an enclosure, literally. Here it means the Church—the Jewish Church. The other sheep were the Gentiles, who soon after were brought into this fold, as the Saviour said.

We have read before that the Gentiles should “come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” The Saviour says he will bring them, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matt. iii, 12. Here the Church is represented as a threshing-floor; and our Lord thoroughly purges it. But does he tear up the floor? The fan is used. The floor is purged and remains. Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. The Church remains.

It is in view of this, that the Saviour says to the disciples, (John iv, 37, 38,) "Herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour." The field was cultivated before the time of the disciples. The patriarchs and prophets laboured, and the apostles entered into their labours. They desired to see the day the apostles saw, but saw it not.

"And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. viii, 11, 12.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" in the above text must refer to the Church, or the kingdom of heaven on earth. For, to apply it to the kingdom of heaven above, is to involve the text in an unanswerable difficulty. For in what sense, then, are the "children of the kingdom cast out?" And to apply the phrase to the Church, as we necessarily must, then in the gospel dispensation we see many coming from the east and from the west, and sitting down in the Church with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; while the children of the kingdom—that is, the Jews, who were the

natural seed of Abraham—are cast out for their unbelief. This was the case. The Jews were broken off because of their unbelief: they were cast out.

But the coming into the Church with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the point. How is this? If Christ destroyed the Church of Abraham, and established another, as the opponents of infant baptism say, I ask again, How is this? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could have had no connexion with the new Church which the Baptists say our Lord established, and consequently none in the new Church could sit with them. The only reasonable explanation then, of the above text is, that the kingdom was established of old; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were in it. This kingdom endures; it is founded on a rock, built on the foundation of the “apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” The door of this Church was opened to the Gentiles, and many shall come from the east and from the west and sit down in this Church with the ancient worthies; while the proud Pharisees and unbelieving Jews shall be cast out. The Church, then, was not destroyed. The ancient worthies had their children in this kingdom with them. Shall those who come from the east and west bring theirs also? Why

not? The Lord says of infants, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." But what sign will they receive of their membership? They formerly received the same sign as their parents; shall they not have the same sign as their parents now? Let the Baptist reader think of this question for the present, while we further consider the continuation of the Abrahamic Church.

"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen, saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked

men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.—Jesus saith unto them, Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Matt. xxi, 33–43.

Let us look at this parable. The vineyard our Lord calls the kingdom of God—the Church, as organized in the days of Abraham. Hedged it about. “I will curse him that curseth thee, and bless him that blesseth thee.” Built a tower for his watchmen. “Digged a wine-press,” which Christ trod alone. He let it out to husbandmen—to the Jews. He sent his servants for fruit—his prophets. The Jews beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

But last of all he sent his Son, even Jesus; and they cast him out and slew him. Now what shall be done with this vineyard? The Jews themselves said, He will destroy the husbandmen, and let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen. And the Saviour said, in the application of the parable, “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, [Jews,] and given to a nation [the Gentiles] bringing forth the fruits in their seasons.” But the vineyard was not destroyed—“not a stake thereof broken,” “neither a cord unloosed.” It was taken from

the Jews, and let out to the Gentiles. But what about the children ; did the Gentiles bring their children into the vineyard ? The Jews had theirs in the kingdom ; and Paul says, "There is no difference between the Jews and the Greeks." What do you say, my Baptist brother ? The vineyard is not destroyed. The hedge is there still, a wall of fire, and the glory in the midst. The tower is there, and the watchmen are at their posts. The husbandmen are in the vineyard. O that they may give to God the fruits in their season. This parable is unmistakable in its meaning. The words are specific, and the testimony is direct. And in no form of words could it be more clearly stated, that the Church of the gospel dispensation is the Jewish Church continued. Certainly it would be a matter of prudence for the opponents of infant baptism to review their ground, and see by what authority they reject infants from this Church, and refuse them the sign of their membership ; for they were in this Church, which has opened its door to the Gentiles, and received the same sign of membership as adults.

The parable of the prodigal son, also shows clearly the identity of the Jewish with the Christian Church. The parable is too long for insertion in this place, but it is so familiar that a

reference to its different parts will be sufficient for the reader.

The two sons represent the Jews and Gentiles. The house represents the Church. The wandering of the younger son shows the sin and profi-gacy of the Gentiles. After a long time he re- turns. The Gentiles come into the Church, as in the case of Cornelius and other Gentiles. The older son would not come into the house with the younger, but stood without. So the Jews were angry when the Gentiles came into the Church, and would not remain in the Church with them. The father went out and invited them in. So God by his gospel invited the Jews, "beginning at Jerusalem." But the Jews stand without unto this day; while the younger son, or the Gentiles, is clothed in the best robe, and is in his father's house, where there is bread enough and to spare. This, all agree, is the meaning of the parable. But now let us look at the house. The older son, or the Jew, was at home in this house all the time the younger son, or the Gen- tile, was in the far country. Then the Gentiles came in, and the Jews went out. But the house remains the same, whether the Jew was in it, or the Gentile. All must see and feel this truth. The house was not thrown down. The Church of God remains. For our Saviour says this case

represents the kingdom of heaven. It can in no sense represent the kingdom of heaven above, and must, therefore, relate to the Church on earth. But in this Church infants received the same external sign of membership as adults. By whose authority has this rite been taken from them? Let those most deeply interested answer.

In the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans he argues this question, while speaking of the casting off of the Jews, and the coming in, of the Gentiles. He speaks of the Church under the figure of an olive-tree. The Jews, the natural branches, who were broken off for their unbelief. The Gentiles were grafted in among the believing Jews, into this same olive-tree. This was the change. It was in the branches, and not in the root; for the Gentiles who came in among the believing Jews, partook of the "root and fatness of the tree." And if the Jews continue not in unbelief, they shall be grafted in again into the same olive-tree. The tree was not destroyed. Therefore the Church remains the same, and the Jews shall return from their unbelief, and shall be grafted in again to this Church from whence they went out. And both Jews and Gentiles shall sit down together in this Church with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the Jews have their children in this kingdom. May the

Gentiles bring theirs also into the Church? Paul says, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." The Church, then, remains the same in all ages,—not one cord is broken, neither is one stake removed. And if our Lord has not excluded infants from this fold, they have a divine right to their place, as also to the sign of their membership.

We might leave this first proposition here, having shown infants to be members of the Church, and also proved the continuation of the Abrahamic Church into the Christian dispensation. We might leave this proposition until some one shall show that the great Teacher has rejected the lambs from the fold. But we can afford to do in this argument what in justice could not be required of us, and show not only that infants were appointed members of the Church by divine authority at its organization, but that, in the days of our Lord's incarnation, he most positively reaffirmed this right to infants. This fact we will show, and close our argument on this proposition. See Mark x, 13–16: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the king-

dom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." What did our Lord mean by this passage? In order to understand it ourselves, let us inquire, How would those parents and others, who heard the Lord speak these words, understand them? These persons were Jews—members of the Church of Abraham. They never heard of a kingdom of God where there were no children. Themselves and their children belonged to this Church. They had heard John say, "The kingdom of God is at hand." The Saviour had said the same. All looked for its spreading glory to be revealed. They looked for no destruction of the Church; for no change in the classes of persons who should compose her membership. They, with these views, brought their children to Christ that he, the great Teacher, should touch them. Jesus took them in his arms and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." Could they understand him in any other way, than that children were to receive in the gospel dispensation the same advantages as they had in the Abrahamic Church? They certainly could have understood our Lord in no other sense. The Saviour knew that the phrase "kingdom of God" was

applied to the Church on earth. He also knew that infants belonged to that kingdom in the Jewish age. And if he designed to turn the lambs out of the fold, is this the way he would have talked in the presence of this multitude? His language would have led them astray. But on what ground did our Lord rebuke the disciples? On the ground that infants had rights in the kingdom. "Of such is the kingdom." And he took them up in his arms and blessed them. He said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, here on earth, in the kingdom below; "for of such is the kingdom." But it may be said that the phrase kingdom of God refers to heaven above. How much this view will help our opponents the intelligent reader must decide. It is an admission, at least, that in the higher and purer kingdom infants are members. And not merely members, but our Lord presents them as patterns for others. One might think if they are such exalted members of the kingdom above, they might have some humble place in the Church below.

But there is another view to be taken of this text. Is it true that the kingdom of heaven above is composed of such infants as Christ held in his arms? Here was flesh and blood. This of course could not be in the kingdom of heaven above. If one says, Christ referred to their souls,

we might ask, How do you know that? But suppose he did. We would ask, Were the souls of these infants in Christ's arms such as are in the kingdom of heaven above? If these infants were depraved like others,—and we have no reason to suppose differently,—then it would seem that these infants were much better patterns for the earthly Church than the heavenly; for here is the blood of the covenant to cleanse our souls and prepare us for the Church above. But allowing the phrase “kingdom of God” to apply to the Church on earth, it avoids all difficulties, and leaves infants, by the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, where they were by divine authority at first appointed—as members of the Church on earth.

This proposition being established, we shall proceed with this truth to the investigation of our second affirmation.

II. *Infants, from the origin of the Church, have received by divine authority the same external sign of membership as adults; which sign at the first was circumcision—afterward baptism.*

In the preceding pages it has been already shown that infants were, at the origin of the Church, received as members, and by divine authority received the same external sign of their

membership as adults. But we deem it proper to refer to this point again, that this part of the subject may appear before the reader in this place, where it more fitly belongs. At the same time, we may observe that it is not denied by the Baptists that infants were members of the Abrahamic Church at the first, and received circumcision, the divinely-appointed sign of Church-membership; but it is denied that they have the same right at present. Of course it will devolve on those who take from infants the sign of their membership, to show their authority for so doing. But as much is done by our Baptist friends on this question by declamation, and very little by Scripture testimony, or sound argument, we will leave them with their assertions and denials, and endeavour, by the light of the Scripture, to trace along the history of the Church, and see if we can find where infants were rejected from the fold, or when the good Shepherd refused them the sign of their membership. In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, we learn that Abraham was circumcised at ninety years old and nine, as a sign of his relation to the covenant, and as a seal of the righteousness of his faith. And all the males of his house were circumcised that same day; Ishmael, being especially named, was thirteen years old when this organization

took place. And in the twenty-first chapter of Genesis it is said, "And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him." Here it is clearly seen that infants received the same sign of membership as adults. From infancy to age there was but one external sign of membership, and that was circumcision. "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii, 14. So it seems a child at eight days old could break a covenant, and forfeit a Church relation, in the days when God first established his kingdom on the earth. Does the Baptist reader ask what good it can do to baptize a child? This sign of Church-membership was equally important to infants and adults. And it was confirmed again in the days of Moses: "Moses gave unto you circumcision, not because it was of Moses, but of the fathers." We need scarcely remark that this ordinance was strictly observed in the Jewish Church until the opening of the gospel dispensation, and was received by all the male children of the Jews, as well as by all male proselytes received into the Church from heathen nations. John the Baptist was a child of promise, and his parents "were both righteous before God,

walking in all the commandments and *ordinances* of the Lord blameless." Such parents, of course, would circumcise their son, for this was an ordinance in the Church in which Zacharias was a priest. But the father disbelieved the promise of the angel, and was struck dumb, while burning incense at the altar. "And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child," and they wanted a name. [This seems a little like infant baptism. "Name this child," says the administrator to the parents.] So "they called his name Zacharias, after his father." "And his mother answered and said, Not so ; but he shall be called John." And his father "asked, for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." Surely this good man was no Baptist, or he never could have been so blessed during the consecration of an infant. But he was blessed, and filled with the "Holy Ghost," and prophesied. And what did he say? Did he talk of the destruction of the old Church, and the casting of infants out of the fold? Not so. But he prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, [yes, of Israel ;] for he hath visited his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant

David; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his *holy covenant*; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Here is circumcision as practised in the Church among the pious Jews; and it shows that in the days of John, it was the sign of membership, the inductive ordinance of the Church of God. And it also shows that in its performance, God was himself present, to open the mouth of the dumb, to cause the tongue to utter prophetic truth, and to fill the soul with the Holy Ghost. The hope of this good man rested in the covenant of Abraham, of which circumcision was the sign, that God would save his Church from its enemies, and enable them to serve the Lord in the future, "without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life." Will the Baptist reader say that circumcision was a carnal ordinance?

So of our Lord. "When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel." Paul also says he himself was "circumcised the eighth day."

This brings us to an important period in the

history of the Church. The gospel day now begins to dawn. Now the Church may arise and "put on her beautiful garments." Now she may "arise and shine, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon her." But is this the last of infant membership? Shall no parent's heart again rejoice as he gives his child in covenant relation to God and his Church? Shall the friends and neighbours no more come in, as they did at the circumcision of John and Jesus, to witness the consecration of the new-born lamb, as it takes its place in the fold of the good Shepherd? But perhaps the Baptist reader says, Circumcision passed away at the opening of the gospel dispensation. Granted. But the fold did not pass away. "Not one stake was removed, not one cord was broken." The good Shepherd did not pass away; for he is the "same yesterday, to-day, and forever." The sheep did not pass away; for the good Shepherd says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring;—and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Circumcision is passed away; but has God thereby "cast off his people?" "God forbid!" If the good Shepherd saw fit, for his own honour, and the good of his flock, to change the mark, or the outward sign of their relation to himself, who shall infer therefrom that half

of the flock are turned out of the fold? The Church is the same, and Christ is the same.

Allow for a moment that circumcision had continued the inductive ordinance of the Church in the gospel dispensation; would there be any controversy as to the right of infants to Church relation, and the sign of their membership? We presume not. But baptism is the inductive ordinance of the gospel dispensation. Have infants a right to this sign? O, no! says the Baptist reader. Baptism does not come in the place of circumcision. But we ask, Is not baptism the sign of Church-membership—the inductive ordinance of the gospel dispensation? And this question the Baptists will answer in the affirmative. Why not, then, allow infants to receive the sign, inasmuch as Christ says of infants, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven?” Our Baptist friends are very sensitive on this point, and put forth “desperate efforts” to show that baptism does not come in the place of circumcision. The reason for this “desperate effort” is very manifest: for if it should appear that at the coming of Christ circumcision was abrogated, and baptism appointed in its place, then it would follow, that as infants received the former, so they should receive the latter. And this proves infant baptism,—the very thing that the Baptists have set themselves to reject.

We do not claim that, in every particular, baptism answers to circumcision; for if this were the case, then had there been no need of a change. But that they agree in their leading characteristics, and that our Lord appointed baptism to serve the Church in the gospel dispensation, as circumcision had in the Jewish age, we shall endeavour to show. We are not particular how this thought is expressed, for we are not disposed to contend about words. If the Baptists do not admit baptism "in the place of circumcision," but would prefer some other form of words to express the relation of the two ordinances, we shall not object. All that is essential to this argument is, that these two ordinances answer to each other in each being an inductive ordinance into the Church,—a sign of Church-membership, and also an outward sign of an inward grace, a sign of regeneration,—and that when circumcision ceased to be binding as an ordinance of the Church, baptism was divinely appointed. These points are so clearly set forth in the Scripture, it would seem incredible that any sane man ever denied them. What difference, then, does it make whether we say "baptism came in the place of circumcision," or whether we say each had its own place in the Church? The facts are the same. Before Christ came, persons were received into the Church by circumcision; after-

ward by baptism. To the Church before the coming of Christ, circumcision was the sign of regeneration ; but since the coming of Christ this office has been performed by baptism. And it is also a fact, that when circumcision was abrogated, baptism was divinely appointed. Now what effect can it have on this question for a Baptist to show points of difference, in some unimportant particulars, in these ordinances ? A door of a house is removed, and a new one is added ; but the new one differs from the old in many particulars. There is a difference in the wood of which they are constructed,—a difference in the size, in the finish, and also in the manner of opening. But the old door was the way of entrance into the building. So is the new door the way of entrance into the same building. And it makes no difference with the facts, whether we say the new door comes in the place of the old one, or whether we say each door stands in its own place. But we do think it would be a horrible conclusion to say, Because the father has exchanged the old door for a new one, therefore all his children must be turned out of his house. The Church is the same in all ages ; but at the coming of Christ there was a change in the ordinances. Baptism became the inductive ordinance of the Church by divine appointment, and circumcision, by consequence, was

abrogated. This being the case, which we shall presently proceed to show, it follows conclusively that the right of infants to Christian baptism in the present dispensation of the Church, is equally clear, as was their right to circumcision in the Jewish age. Let us look, then, at the arguments on this point.

1. The changes which took place in the institutions of the Church at the coming of Christ, furnish the strongest presumption that baptism sustains the same spiritual relation to the Church as did circumcision.

There were three divinely-appointed institutions in the Church previous to the giving of the law, which is called the law of Moses. These were the *Sabbath*, *Circumcision*, and the *Passover*. These institutions being previous to the law of Moses, did not depend upon that law for their existence. To these institutions "the law was added," "until the Seed should come." And Christ was the end of this law for righteousness' sake. But the passing away of the law of ceremonies did not remove these institutions from the Church. They existed by divine appointment before the law was added. They also survived its passing away. They were changed, it is true, in their form; but in each the original intent was preserved. Nor is this change a matter of wonder. It would

seem highly proper that, at the coming of Christ to his Church, such changes should take place in the outward ordinances of his Zion as should ever after show that the Lord had visited his temple.

Could any man expect that Jesus, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—"God manifest in the flesh," would spend thirty-three years in his Church below, in person, and leave no mark by which he could be remembered? Certainly this could not be expected. But a change in the ordinances of the Church was necessary, not only for the honour of the Redeemer, but also for the good of his people. The ordinances of the Church, previous to the coming of Christ, were prospective. The paschal lamb was a type of Christ, and looked forward to a coming Saviour. Abraham received circumcision as a sign and "seal of the righteousness of his faith" in a coming Saviour. These ordinances of the Church looked forward, and saw the Redeemer coming. But when Christ had come, and suffered on the cross, there must of necessity be a change in the ordinances, that they might point back to his sufferings, and stand as memorials of our dying Lord. So our Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of me." And now let us look at the changes which took place

in the outward forms of the institutions of the Church at the coming of Christ. And

(1.) The day of the Sabbath was changed. The seventh day of the week was the Jewish Sabbath ; but in the gospel dispensation the first day of the week is the " holy day." Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week ; and I suppose that all, Baptists as well as others, who observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath, will admit that that change is in honour of our Lord's resurrection. Nor will it change the fact, if we say the Christian Sunday " comes in the place" of the Jewish Sabbath ; although this form of expression may be very offensive to the Baptist reader, for fear that it may in some way affect the case of circumcision. But however this may be, one thing is certain,—the Christian Sunday, or first day of the week, is to the Church at present what the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day, was to the Church of old ; having this important additional idea, that Christ has come, suffered and died, and rose from the dead on the first day of the week, which we keep in honour of his resurrection. I ask, then, Is the Sabbath lost ? And all answer, It is not. And even the Baptists themselves, in enforcing the obligations to keep the first day of the week holy, quote the old Jewish scriptures in reference to the seventh day,

admitting thereby that they believe the Christian Sunday takes the place in the Church of the Jewish Sabbath.

(2.) The Passover was a divinely-appointed ordinance of the Jewish Church. It was celebrated by killing and eating the paschal lamb, which was a striking type of the Lamb of God. The eating of this lamb was not only in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, but it also looked forward to Christ, the sprinkling of whose blood should wash away sin, and turn away the angel of death. In view of this Paul calls Christ "our Passover, sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. v, 7. Is this institution lost to the Church? Have we no paschal supper, no eucharistic feast? Yes, we have the true Lamb of God. The real eucharist is ours. "For I say unto you," said Jesus, at the last passover, "I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." The passover looked to the kingdom of God, or the gospel dispensation, for its fulfilment: so when they had finished the paschal supper, Jesus took bread and gave thanks, and said, "Eat ye all of this, for this is my body,"—the body of the real lamb of God,—"which is broken for you." Likewise he took the cup, and said, "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you." Here the passover, in

great tenderness and love, melts away in the presence of Jesus into the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The two forms of this ordinance met at the same table, and Jesus was there in person to preside. The passover had long looked forward for the Lamb of God, but now it saw him. The Master had come. The work of this sacrament, in the form of the passover, was now done; and like Simeon it said, "Let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." But this sacrament, in the form of the Lord's supper, went out from that solemn hour to tell the story of the cross. Two of these ancient institutions of the Church, then, still live. When the Lord came, they put on their beautiful garments, and stand now in the Church to point to the cross of the Redeemer. Let us look after circumcision, and see if anything in the Church at present answers to it, as the Lord's supper does to the passover.

(3.) Circumcision was the inductive ordinance of the Church from Abraham to Christ, as we have clearly shown in another place. But at the coming of our Lord, who "is head over all things to the Church," he appointed baptism as the inductive ordinance of the Church, in the gospel dispensation, and thereby abrogated circumcision. The change in this ordinance was

equally as necessary as the change in the ordinance above-mentioned, for circumcision was a prospective ordinance. Abraham received it as a sign of faith in a coming Messiah. To receive it, then, after Christ had come would be to reject him, and look forward for another. So Paul says, "I testify unto you, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Why? Because you thereby reject him, and look forward for another. All the ordinances of the Church point to Christ as the Saviour. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. All eyes look unto him—"Looking unto Jesus." And because circumcision looked forward, it must of necessity be changed, so as to point back to our Lord. This is done in baptism. "I believe that Jesus is the Christ," is the language of those who seek baptism. Circumcision is abrogated; and if baptism does not serve the Church, as the inductive ordinance, the Church has no such ordinance in the gospel dispensation. For, certainly, the Lord's supper is not an initiatory ordinance, as it is often to be repeated: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi, 26. But baptism is the inductive ordinance of the Church, the Baptists themselves being judges. They call it "the door into the Church;" and on this they found their doctrine

of "close communion." Mr. Remington, speaking of baptism, in his "Reasons for becoming a Baptist," page 5, says, "It is the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom." And our Lord says of infants, "Of such is the kingdom." I wonder if Mr. Remington would give this mark to infants? In the Abrahamic Church, then, we find three sacred institutions, previous to the law of Moses—the *Sabbath*, *circumcision*, and the *passover*. We find them also, at the coming of Christ, for the honour of the Master and the good of his disciples, passing into the Christian *Sunday*, Christian *baptism*, and the *Lord's supper*. The candid reader will clearly perceive in the changes which took place in the institutions of the Church at the coming of Christ, a strong presumption, that baptism takes the same spiritual relation to the Church as did circumcision.

2. Let us look at the leading points of correspondence in these sacraments of the Church, in further proof of this fact. It has already been observed, that these ordinances correspond in each being an initiatory ordinance of the Church,—the one in the Jewish age, the other in the gospel dispensation. Secondly, they correspond in each being a sign of a clean heart: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly—in the flesh: but he

is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii, 28, 29. This passage is too plain to need any remark. Every one can see that circumcision represents the work of the Spirit in the heart. So with baptism. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." That is, to represent the washing away of sins. Here these ordinances answer to each other. Thirdly, each was a sign of faith. Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Rom. iv, 11. I suppose the Baptists will not ask for proof that baptism is a sign of faith, so long as they talk so much of believers' baptism. But it is with baptism as it was with circumcision. In adults faith is required. "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest," was Philip's language to the eunuch. Acts viii, 37. Fourthly, circumcision was a sign of peculiar relation to God. And "I will be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee," is the language of the covenant of which circumcision is the sign and seal. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise *therefore* the foreskin of

your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x, 15, 16.

Baptism, says Mr. Remington, is "the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom." This certainly ought to be good authority with the Baptists, for I quote from the *eighth edition* of his "Reasons for becoming a Baptist," published by the Baptist Publication Society. Our Lord says, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This baptism is the initiatory rite of the Church, and a "line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom." This Church, separated from the world, and "baptized into Christ," the Apostle Peter calls "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Herein, then, do baptism and circumcision correspond. And in these points circumcision served the Church of old, and baptism serves it at present.

3. That baptism answers to circumcision we will further show, by the following scriptures: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark xvi, 15, 16. To understand the full import of this commission, let us notice the following particulars:—

(1.) The Church is the same in all ages. Circumcision was the initiatory rite, from its origin until the coming of Christ. The original design in establishing the Church was to bless all nations, as is clearly specified in the covenant. But hitherto its peculiar privileges had been confined to the Jews. Our Lord said of his personal ministry, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and prohibited his disciples not only from preaching to the Gentiles, but from entering any city of the Samaritans.

(2.) But the time had now come for this ancient promise to be fulfilled. All nations were now to be blessed. The supper was ready: the highways and hedges were now to be explored, and all the world were to be invited to the great supper of the Lamb. All nations, tongues, and people were to have equal privileges with the Jews; to come in, and take their places in the Church of God.

(3.) But by what external sign were they to be admitted? By baptism. This is positively expressed in the commission—"Baptizing them in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*." Moses reappointed circumcision at the giving of the law; but our Lord does not reenact this sign of membership, but most positively appoints baptism in its room and stead. Circumcision passes away, and baptism becomes the inductive ordinance of the Church. Since, then, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," what is more vain than for the Baptists to write and preach that the ordinance of Christian baptism does not serve the Church at present, as did the former ordinance of circumcision?

But let us also quote Gal. iii, 27-29: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." On this text we ask attention to the following:—

(1.) This passage clearly shows that baptism answers to circumcision in being the initiatory rite of the Church; for as many as were baptized

into Christ "have put on Christ." That is, baptism is the "outward sign of an inward grace," and testifies that you have "Christ formed within"—that you have taken upon yourselves the profession of faith in Christ, and have entered into the Church by baptism; and as this office was previously performed by circumcision, baptism answers to that ordinance in this particular.

(2.) This passage shows this same truth, by intimating points of difference wherein baptism has the advantage over circumcision. In baptism, "there is neither Jew nor Greek." Why this expression? Only that circumcision made a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and baptism makes none. In baptism there is "neither bond nor free;" in circumcision there was a difference. In baptism "there is neither male nor female;" but circumcision made a distinction between males and females. Now we appeal to the candid reader, if it is not manifestly clear in this passage, that the apostle speaks of baptism following circumcision as an ordinance of the Church, pointing out at the same time those particulars wherein it offers greater privileges to the world?

(3.) But "if ye be Christ's," *by baptism*, "then are ye Abraham's seed," *which was circumcised*, "and heirs according to the promise." This

promise was sealed by circumcision ; how, then, could baptism claim that promise, unless it was put by the great Head of the Church in the place of circumcision ? Allow this truth, and the text is plain, and the references in it are easy and natural ; but reject this fact, and its beauty is defaced, and its references are unintelligible.

Let us also look at Col. ii, 10-12 : "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power : in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ : buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In this text baptism and circumcision are made to answer to each other by the apostle, in being alike a representative of a completeness in Christ. How were they completed ? By circumcision — by baptism. Here the sign is taken for the thing signified—a very common mode of Scripture teaching. But the correspondence of the ordinances is clearly seen in both representing the same thing—a completeness in Christ. But (2.) "In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ—buried with him in baptism." Here the apostle manifestly

calls baptism the circumcision of Christ. As circumcision was formerly in the Church an inductive ordinance, and a sign of a clean heart; and as Christ abrogated circumcision by appointing baptism for this very purpose, baptism might, with the greatest propriety, be called the circumcision of Christ. If the apostle did not design thus to express the relation of these ordinances to each other, and also their relation to the Church, his words, in this passage, are highly calculated to mislead; for there is no other reasonable interpretation that can be put upon them. To justify this expression, I will introduce here the comment of Mr. Carson on this text. In his large work on baptism, page 229, he says: "This passage clearly shows us what came in the room of circumcision. The circumcision made without, came in the room of circumcision made with hands; the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, came in the room of the cutting off the foreskin; the circumcision of Christ came in the room of the circumcision of Moses. All Christians are circumcised in heart, as all Jewish males were circumcised in the flesh." So Mr. Carson has found a substitute for circumcision, aside from Christian baptism; and perhaps his admirers will have no more trouble with this text. But let us look at the consequences of this explanation:

perhaps they may be as fearful even as infant baptism. Mr. Carson certainly would not say that one thing came in the room of another, and that both were present and in force at the same time. This would be too ridiculous, even for *his* side of this important question. But the "circumcision of the heart"—the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," Mr. Carson says, "came in the room of the circumcision of Moses." Until circumcision passed away, then, according to Mr. Carson, there was no circumcising of hearts—no "putting off the body of sins." This certainly is horrible! No wonder that "prophets and kings" desired to see the day of the Lord Jesus. Mr. Carson's biographer says of him:—

"He was a warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield."

He was, undoubtedly, a terrible man with a sword; and it is well for the inhabitants of the old world that his sword happened not to be the "sword of the Spirit." If it had been, they must all have perished with uncircumcised hearts, and gone to eternal ruin with the body of their sins. But Mr. Carson's sword in this case had neither edge nor power. The Apostle Paul was able to find some of the brightest examples of faith among the ancient worthies, who lived and died during

the time of the circumcision of Moses. Mr. Carson's effort on this text only shows how difficult it is to make the word of God speak differently from the design of the Spirit. But Mr. Carson was not always so far out of the way ; for he says on the same page, "Circumcision and baptism correspond in meaning. They both relate to the removal of sin—the one by cutting, the other by washing." But I suppose Mr. Carson, though he made this admission of the correspondence of these ordinances, would not have gone as far as Justin Martyr, one of the earliest fathers of the Church, who said on this subject: "We Gentiles have not received that *circumcision* according to the flesh, but that which is spiritual—and moreover, for indeed we were sinners, we have received this in *baptism*, through God's mercy ; and it is enjoined on all to receive it in like manner."

"If, then," as Mr. Watson observes, "we bring all these considerations under one view, we shall find it sufficiently established that baptism is the sign and seal of the covenant of grace under its perfected dispensation ; that it is the grand initiatory act by which we enter into this covenant in order to claim all its spiritual blessings, and to take upon ourselves all its obligations ; that it was appointed by Jesus Christ in a manner which plainly put it in the place of circumcision ; that

it is now the means by which men become Abraham's spiritual children, and heirs with him of the promise, which was the office of circumcision until 'the Sæd,' the Messiah, should come; and that baptism is, therefore, expressly called by St. Paul 'the circumcision of Christ,' in a sense which can only import that baptism has now taken the place of the Abrahamic rite."

Let us now devote a little space to the difficulties and objections started by the Baptists to this relation of baptism to circumcision. And

1. It is asked, "If baptism succeeds in the place of circumcision, how came it that both of them were in full force at the same time?"

It would be a sufficient answer to this difficulty simply to say, They were not in full force at the same time. But for fear the Baptists may consider it a want of respect, we will remark a little more at length, and not dismiss this objection in so summary a manner. Circumcision was divinely appointed as the initiatory ordinance of the Church, and must consequently have been in full force until it was abrogated by divine authority, or another appointed in its place. This was not done until the giving of the great commission; and then baptism by divine appointment, became the inductive ordinance of the Church, and circumcision ceased to be binding. Baptism was not in force, as an

initiatory rite, previous to the commission ; nor was circumcision in force after it. The baptisms administered previous to the commission, as in the case of John's baptism, were unto repentance, and were not considered as gospel baptism ; and hence were repeated after the giving of the great commission, as is seen in Acts xix, 5. And as to circumcision being in full force after the commission, it is so far from being true, that it was positively forbidden. "If ye be circumcised," says Paul, "Christ shall profit you nothing." But it is alleged that Paul circumcised Timothy. But for what reason ? "Because of the Jews which were in those quarters : for they knew all that his father was a Greek." Acts xvi, 3. The presumption is, if circumcision had been in full force, Paul would have circumcised Timothy, not "because of the Jews," but because God had commanded it. Timothy's circumcision involved no obligation. It was simply a yielding to the prejudices of the Jews, according to Paul's rule of expediency. Any other view would set the apostle at war with himself. This objection fails, then, just because it affirms what is not true.

2. Objection. "If circumcision and baptism were each a sign of Church-membership, why were those previously circumcised baptized after the coming of Christ?" The answer to this is

easy : circumcision and baptism were not only signs of membership in the Church, but they were also signs of faith in Christ. He who received circumcision believed Christ *would* come ; he that received baptism believed Christ *had* come. In this sense, the same person might receive both ordinances with the greatest propriety. There is no force in this objection.

3. It is alleged that there are many points of difference between circumcision and baptism ; and, therefore, baptism does not come in the place of circumcision. This is a favourite objection with the Baptists. Some of their writers have gathered up these points of difference, and set them down in order, and infer from each that the ordinances have no relation to each other ; draw a general conclusion from a particular premiss ; and, perhaps, in the next sentence talk of logic and sound argument. Now, that there are points of difference, we most cheerfully admit. And it is these points of difference that made the change necessary. Had there been no difference, then one would have answered as well as the other, and there would have been no change. But while we admit that there are points of difference, it is also manifest, that in their leading characteristics they answer to each other. This we have abundantly proved in another place. And even Mr.

Carson says they correspond to each other. "They both relate to the removal of sin; the one by cutting, the other by washing."

What, then, is the force of this objection, which rests on no other foundation than the unimportant points of difference in these ordinances; which points of difference only make the change necessary for which we plead? We have, then, in this argument, these two facts clearly sustained.

(1.) That infants are, by divine appointment, members of the visible Church, and down to the coming of Christ received circumcision, the common sign of membership both for infants and adults.

(2.) That in the changes which took place in the ordinances of the Church at the coming of Christ, baptism was appointed to sustain the same spiritual relation to the Church as did circumcision.

We shall now proceed more directly to inquire if infants received baptism—this newly-appointed sign, which Paul calls "the circumcision of Christ." But we may observe, before we enter upon this feature of the subject, that the mind of the reader, who has paid attention to these points in this argument, is now prepared to receive infant baptism, unless he shall find it forbidden, either by Christ or his apostles. He sees the Church the same in both dispensations. He sees no change

in the covenant on which it stands, which is God's promise sealed by circumcision first; afterward by baptism. He sees infants receiving circumcision, the first ordinance of the Church, by divine command, in common with adults. He also sees a necessity for a change in this inductive ordinance, and hears our Lord command and appoint baptism to be henceforth the visible sign of discipleship in his Church. Any other conclusion, than that infants are to receive this new sign as they did the old, is unnatural, far-fetched, and unsound. But the Baptist reader at this point, perhaps, may say, We want no arguments on "positive institutions;" we want express words. This is equal to saying, If the Lord does not command in such manner as we think befitting, we will not regard him. This is the great forte of the Baptists on this question: away with all arguments—away with all inferences. This position of the Baptists subjects them to the just ridicule even of children. It is at war with every principle of government, either human or divine. It is at war with the first principles of common-sense. It is at war with the practice of the Baptists themselves. And if they will allow an inference, I will say, It reduces rational man to the level of the unthinking brute, and takes from him the privilege of drawing a conclusion. For further remarks on this point

we refer the reader to the answer to the first objection in the last part of this argument.

We have already noticed the religious consecration of infants at the opening of the gospel dispensation. The heart of Zacharias was filled with love and praise, and his tongue loosed to tell the goodness of God to his Church, when he presented John in holy circumcision to God. But circumcision ceased as the inductive ordinance of the Church, and baptism was divinely appointed for that purpose. And that infants actually received baptism, this new sign of membership, in common with adults, is clearly manifest from the following considerations :—

1. To have rejected infants from Christian baptism, would have been to take unwarrantable liberty with the covenant which God made with his Church.

This covenant was strictly commanded : “Thou shalt keep my covenant,” is the language of the “Most High.” God calls this covenant “my covenant.” Who, then, had a right to change it? Certainly none but God himself. It is only, then, necessary to inquire what changes God has made in this covenant, and the subject is clear; for all parts of it not altered by God himself, must remain as when it was first established. The Lord Jesus, “in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the

Godhead bodily," did, in the great commission, change the outward sign of this covenant, and instead of saying, Circumcise all nations, he said, "*Baptize* all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is all the change God has ever made in this covenant since the day that "God went up from Abraham." Now in this covenant it is a particular stipulation that infants should be visibly recognised in this holy corporation. Indeed, the covenant was established with infants: "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac." And to have refused baptism, the visible sign of relationship to this holy corporation, to infants, would have been to act not only without law, but directly against the law of the covenant. But as the apostles were law-abiding, and followed the teachings of our Lord, even unto death, it cannot be that they took upon themselves, without authority, to cast the lambs out of the fold. And, therefore, infants received baptism, the common sign of the covenant, and of Church relation in the gospel dispensation.

But to this view the Baptists object, that the law of baptism requires faith; and as infants cannot believe, they must not be baptized. But this objection is wholly neutralized by the fact that circumcision, the common sign for infants and

adults, required faith also. Abraham received it as a sign of his faith. And it not only required faith, but obedience; for it made them "debtors to do the whole law." And yet circumcision, with all its obligations, was perfectly appropriate for infants, the Lord himself being judge. Surely the Baptists have very tender consciences on this subject: they refuse baptism to infants, because it requires faith of adults.

2. If infants did not receive baptism as the outward sign of their relation to God and his Church, then they were left without any sign at all; and it is morally certain that this would have been urged by the Judaizing teachers as a reason for the continuing of circumcision as an ordinance in the Church.

Now, if infants were not allowed to receive baptism, the newly-appointed sign of Church relation, then was over one-half of the Church cut off from Church-membership by the abrogation of circumcision; and a class, too, which was guilty of no wrong—the very class which our Lord presents as the *pattern* for his disciples. The Judaizing teachers followed the apostles, and taught the people that they should "be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses;" and many who embraced the gospel, having strong Jewish prejudices, listened with approbation to their

teachings. Peter himself was blamed on this question, and Barnabas was led away by his influence; but Paul contended earnestly for the true faith, and thus the controversy waxed strong on this subject. No question caused half the dispute in the early Church as did circumcision. Now to suppose that there was such a consequence pending, as the cutting off of over one-half of innocent members of the Church by the abrogation of circumcision, and it was never mentioned or referred to in the controversies, is to suppose a moral impossibility. This is the very point that would have first been seized in every convention, in every discussion, by the advocates of circumcision. Its abrogation cuts off our children. The promise is to us and our children; the abrogation of circumcision makes void the promise. Let any one read the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and he cannot but be convinced, if such consequences had been pending, they would have been mentioned. They argued the continuance of circumcision from the law of Moses, and said, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved;" but not one word, or intimation, that its abrogation would leave infants out of the Church, without the covenant sign. There is only one way to account for their silence, and that is, that Christian baptism

was administered to infants as the sign of their visible relation to God and his Church, and thus saved them from this fearful consequence. Nor will it do for the Baptists to say that these consequences might have been mentioned, and not recorded; for it is asking too much to suppose that St. Luke, in writing the history of this matter, would give their weaker arguments, and pass unnoticed one of such strength. But, moreover, if the Baptists have a right to presume that these things were said and done by the Judaizing teachers, we have an equal right to presume that Paul, ever "valiant for the truth," disputed them, and showed that the abrogation of circumcision had no injurious effect on the rights of infants, as Christian baptism was administered to them as the divinely-appointed sign of their relation to God and his Church.

3. If infants were not allowed Christian baptism, and thereby lost their visible relation to the Church, there is no rational way of accounting for the silence of the *apostles, parents*, and wicked Jews on this question.

In order to a proper view of this feature of the subject, we must remember that the Church of Abraham was continued into the dispensation of the gospel, as is abundantly proved in the former part of this argument; and if infants have not a

right to Christian baptism, they lost their visible relation to the Church when baptism became the inductive ordinance in the place of circumcision. This would cut off more than one-half the members of the Church; and that very portion, too, which was most unoffending; and which our Lord not only declares to be members of his kingdom, but presents them as patterns for others to imitate. Now, to suppose that all this was done without one word of inquiry, or complaint, or censure, is to suppose an absurdity. There are certain principles which govern human actions; and the history of the apostolic age shows that men acted then as now. The apostles asked questions of our Lord, on matters great and small. They sought to know, in private, of doctrines and parables which were mysterious in his public discourses. They sometimes asked questions prompted by ambition; as, "Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Sometimes by curiosity; as, "What shall this man do?" So familiar were the disciples with the Master, that they talked with great confidence, as persons in secret counsel; and at the conclusion Jesus said, "See that ye tell no man, until mine hour is come." These disciples were all Jews, and raised in the Church of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had never heard of a Church which admitted

parents and excluded their children ; and to suppose that these disciples, so intimate with their Master, would stand by and see all infants lose their visible relation to the Church, and never speak of the matter, either to the Lord himself or to each other in private, is to suppose a moral impossibility. These apostles, too, were to be the executors of this scheme of excision, if any such existed—and all passed off without even a word from the Master, or a question from the apostles. Impossible !

But where were the pious parents who followed our Lord, and brought their children that they might receive his blessing ? Is there any way of accounting for their silence on a question that appealed so directly to their parental affections ? These parents had all along belonged to God's Church, with their children. They had consecrated their children to God and his Church by circumcision, according to the covenant, by which the Church was first established. "The promise is to you and your children." Is it possible, in the nature of things, that these parents would all stand and see their unoffending offspring pass out of the Church, and lose their visible relation to God and his covenant, and never ask one word of explanation concerning this wonderful change in the membership of the

Church—never send forth one sigh of regret, nor allow one murmur to escape their lips? Was there no Rachel then to weep for her children, and would not “be comforted because they were not?” Was there no David, then, to mourn for Absalom, and say, “O my son, my son, would God I had died for thee?” Was there no Abraham, then, to pray for his offspring, and say, “O that Ishmael might live before thee?” No. If the Baptists are correct, there were none like these. All infants were cut off from the Church at the coming of Christ, and no parent to pray! no parent to mourn! and no parent in all Israel, even to ask an explanation! Impossible.

But if infants were refused Christian baptism, and thereby lost their visible relation to God and his Church, how can we account for the silence of our Lord’s enemies on this question?

The rulers of the Jews saw the people leaving the Jewish altars, and flocking to hear the Great Teacher; and they said, What shall we do? If we let him alone the world will go after him. What would have been more natural than for their orators to have appealed to the parental affections of the people, and said, He cuts off your children; he makes void the promise, “The promise is to you and your children;” this man excludes your children from the fold, and

cuts them off from the covenanted mercies of God? And what would have been more effectual with the multitude? They would have said in reply to such an appeal, We will return to our Jewish altars, for then it was better with us than now. All these absurdities naturally follow the baseless assumption of the Baptists that, at the coming of Christ, infants were refused baptism, the divinely-appointed sign of Church-membership, and thereby lost their visible relation to God and his Church. But, allow infants to have continued members of the visible Church, and to have received baptism, the common sign of Church-membership, the apostles would say nothing, for they knew infants from the days of Abraham had received the same external rite as adults; the parents would say nothing, for Jesus applied the promise to them and their children; and the rulers of the Jews could say nothing, for the Church in the time of Christ and his apostles received infants, as it had from the beginning.

4. If infants were not allowed Christian baptism, the words of Christ and his apostles were calculated in the highest degree to mislead, when they referred to the children of unbelieving parents: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his dis-

ciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark x, 13-15.

On this text we offer the following observations:—

1. Infants were members of the Church at the coming of Christ, and received the same common sign of this relation as adults. Our Lord is now either to continue their Church relation, or he is to cut them off. Which does he do in this passage? What impression were these words calculated to make on the minds of those who heard them? According to the Baptist view, infants are to be cut off from the Church, of which they had been members from the days of Abraham. Our Lord is to do this work, for none other has the power. He here introduces the case, and what a beginning for such a work! "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." If infants had never before been recognised as members of the Church, this would introduce them into that relation and secure to

them the ordinance of baptism, especially if Mr. Remington is correct in saying that baptism is "the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom." But when we consider that infants had been members of the kingdom of God ever since that kingdom had been established on the earth, the words of our Lord could have but one meaning, and produce but one impression on the minds of those who heard them, and that is, that he recognised infants as members of his Church in the gospel dispensation. If this were not the case, his words in this text are highly calculated to mislead.

2. But the Baptists say the phrase "kingdom of God" relates to the kingdom of heaven above. Let us for a moment suppose it does. Does our Lord, therefore, in this text expel them from the kingdom of heaven on earth? I would ask our Baptist friends, if this is not arguing by inference on positive institutions? And such an inference! I think those parents would have drawn a conclusion directly the reverse of this. If they understood our Lord to speak of heaven above, they would have received it as an additional pledge that their children were not only to continue members of the Church on earth; but, that they should also be members of heaven above. But our Lord makes this fact the ground of the re-

buke which he gave his disciples : "Of such is the kingdom of God." And this the disciples knew very well, if our Lord refers to the kingdom below ; for they knew that from Abraham's time infants had been members of this kingdom. But if Jesus referred to the kingdom above, his rebuke would lose its point, as the disciples did not know so well the membership of the upper kingdom.

But the Baptists take another turn on this text, and say the word "such" does not refer to the infants, but to adults, who are like infants, "such like." It will be seen that this turn cuts infants off from both kingdoms ; and it is only adults who become like infants who get into either kingdom. Worse and worse. But our Lord says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." That is, by the Baptist rule of interpretation, Suffer *infants* to come unto me, and forbid them not, for *adults* are of the kingdom of God. But after all the efforts of the Baptists to silence the voice of this text, it testifies clearly of the rights of infants in the gospel dispensation to membership in the Church ; and if this was not the intention of the Great Teacher, these words are highly calculated to mislead.

"And Jesus took a child and set him by

him, and said unto them, Whoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me." Luke ix, 47, 48. Whatever be the design of this passage, one thing is certain: if our Lord designed to cut infants off from Church relation, this was a singular way to commence the work. Our Baptist friends will certainly acknowledge this. No person would ever mistrust that in this text the Saviour was removing children from the arms of the Church, and cutting them off from the sign of their membership. And yet this was his work, if our Baptist friends are right; for at the coming of Christ, they say they lost their visible relation to the kingdom. But so far from the words of the text intimating any such thing, the passage teaches directly the reverse. "Who-soever shall receive this child in my name." Will the Baptist reader answer in his own mind as he reads along this page? How do the Baptist Churches receive infants in the name of Christ? Do you say they pray for them in the name of Christ? That will not answer the text. They pray for heathen nations in the same way. Do you say they instruct them? So they instruct common adult sinners in the same way. But Mark, speaking of this same case, says, chap. ix, 36, that Christ took this child in his arms, and

undoubtedly he was too small to receive much instruction. Whatever the exact meaning of this text is, we most certainly can agree, that if our Lord intended to exclude infants from the Church, and deprive them of the sign of their membership, his expressions in this text were calculated to mislead, for the Jews would understand him to mean directly the contrary.

But this passage has a meaning, and to understand what it is, we may derive some assistance from another text, wherein our Lord expresses himself in nearly the same words: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Matt. x, 40. These words are spoken to the disciples, and whoever receiveth them, receiveth him that sent them; for "Lo, I am with you alway." But to receive a disciple simply as a stranger, and lodge and feed him, would not be receiving him in the sense of the text; for in doing this, he does no more for the disciple than he should do for any stranger; but he must be received as a disciple—received for the sake of Christ, and in the name of Christ: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, *because ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." The virtue of the action rests in receiving the disciple as belonging to Christ. Herein

is Christ honoured, and not the disciple. He that receiveth the disciple for Christ's sake, and listens to him for Christ's sake, receives Christ with him; and he that receiveth Christ as the sent of God, receiveth also the Father that sent him. The whole, then, depends on receiving the disciple in his appointed relation to Christ.

So whosoever receiveth this child *in my name*, receiveth me. Wherein does the peculiar virtue of this act lie?—a virtue so peculiar, that the Saviour with his Father is received by those who thus receive a little child. This virtue must consist in receiving the child in view of its appointed relation to Christ; and thus the child is received, not in its own name, but in the name of Christ, the Lord. What is this appointed relation which the child sustains to the Lord Jesus? A member of his kingdom. This relation was established by the covenant, and made visible by the ordinance which he received in common with adults. That ordinance was removed and baptism appointed by our Lord as the visible sign of Church relation; and if our Lord designed to cut off infants from the Church, and take from them the external sign of their membership, this text was terribly calculated to mislead all, but especially the Jews.

Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be

baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii, 38, 39.

If infants were to be excluded from the visible Church, and lose the external sign of their membership, here is another passage highly calculated to mislead; for nothing is more certain, than that the Jews would understand this text directly the reverse. That the promise in this text comprehends both parents and children, and was designed to secure baptism to each, is clearly manifest:—

(1.) From its resemblance to the covenant, (Gen. xvii, 7,) where God promised "to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee;" and this resemblance is too circumstantial not to have been designed. First, they agree in both standing in connexion with an ordinance by which persons were admitted into the Church—one with circumcision, the other with baptism. The promise is to "thee and to thy seed;" therefore be circumcised. The promise is "unto you and to your children;" therefore be baptized. Secondly, the resemblance in phraseology is no less striking. Let the reader look at this resemblance, and

remember that circumcision followed the first, and baptism the last. "Unto thee, and to thy seed," followed by circumcision. "Unto you, and to your children," followed by baptism. Now, this correspondence was either accidental, or it was designed. If it was accidental, it was certainly a terrible accident for the Baptists. If it was designed by Peter, then it settles the question. I trust no Baptist will say that the above resemblance was accidental; for they are in the habit of saying, that God in his providence has taken great care of their side of this question; and to say that there are accidents in the Holy Scriptures, would lead to consequences *even worse* than infant baptism. I think, then, we may safely say that Peter, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, designed to so frame this sentence as to make it exactly chime in, through all its parts and circumstances, with the covenant made with Abraham. And what did he design this resemblance for? He certainly designed it for one of two purposes: either to mislead the Jews; or to lead them and their children to Christian baptism, as an ordinance of the Lord Jesus. For how would the Jews understand Peter's words? There could have been but one mind among them on this point. The practice of the Church for centuries had made them familiar with the fact that infants

received the same inductive ordinance of the Church as did adults; and the Church had founded the right of infants to the ordinance on the very passage which Peter here quotes. And to suppose that these Jews would understand this promise, which had from the beginning received their infants, in common with themselves, as now excluding them, is to suppose that they put a construction on this promise entirely forced and unnatural. But the Baptists, struggling to support themselves in their difficulty, of course must say something on this text; and what is it? Why, they say the promise of Peter refers to Joel ii, 28, and the children spoken of by Peter refer only to large sons and daughters. They say the word children means posterity; but I would suggest to them that this is a little dangerous to their cause, as posterity means infants, as well as large boys and girls. But I will set down their interpretation as they intend it—simply, large sons and daughters.

To this interpretation of this text I object:

(1.) Because there is no evidence that Peter refers to Joel in this promise. If it be said he refers to him in his speech, I answer, he also refers to David and the Psalms. Read the chapter and see.

(2.) The evidence is clear that he did refer to

the covenant of Abraham, as we have seen in the resemblance of the promises; and the necessary understanding of both Peter and his hearers.

(3.) The Baptists' view destroys the clearness and beauty of the apostle's words. Peter refers to two classes of persons—*you*, and your *children*. *You* represents adults, and *children* stands for those of a tender age. Here are two classes, and Peter specifies each class in the promise. This shows that there was a gospel difference between the classes, else one specification would have answered for both. Now it is evident, that the gospel makes a distinction in the mode of saving adults and infants—one by faith, the other without faith. Peter recognises the distinction in this place. And to *you*, adults, he says, Repent, every one of *you*, for you are all sinners. And by your repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find forgiveness and justification before God; and thus being justified, you come into a similar relation to God as infants, and with them have a right to baptism; for the promise is to *you* and your *children*. Now, what difference does the gospel make between parents and such “*big boys and girls*” as the Baptists see in this passage? Certainly none. And if such is the case, when Peter said the promise is unto *you*, why did he

add, "and to your *children*?" But Peter predicates the right of baptism on the promise; and consequently, as adults might be baptized because they were specified in the promise, infants, being specified in the promise, might be baptized also.

(4.) I look with suspicion on this interpretation of the Baptists, as it is manifestly a work of necessity to save their creed from utter ruin. This passage points the sword of the Spirit at all who would deny the right of infant baptism. They must either take its fearful edge, or turn it aside by making all these children "*big boys and girls*."

If infants were not allowed baptism by Christ and his apostles, their words were highly calculated to mislead: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." 1 Cor. vii, 14. The question which Paul would settle in this case was, whether it was lawful for a believer and an unbeliever to live together in the marriage state? The apostle answers in the affirmative, and subjoins as a reason for his answer, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." The only thing in this text essential to this discussion is to know what the apostle meant by the words *unclean* and *holy*. The Baptists will agree with us that the term *holy* does not

mean purity, for we alike hold the doctrine of natural depravity. We will also agree, I suppose, that the words are opposite in meaning; so, to find the meaning of one of these words gets the meaning of both. And having agreed that the term *holy* does not mean in this place purity, it follows that the term *unclean* does not mean essential impurity. The voice said to Peter, "Kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or *unclean*." What did Peter mean in this text by the word *unclean*? All will agree that he meant he had not eaten anything forbidden by the law—anything prohibited. Again: "God hath showed me that I should call no man common or *unclean*." And therefore he offered the gospel, with baptism, to Cornelius. The word *unclean*, then, signifies things refused, or prohibited. The term *holy* being its opposite, means things received or allowed by law. Apply, then, this meaning to the terms in the text under consideration, and all is plain. "Else were your children *unclean*,"—rejected—refused, or prohibited. But rejected from what? From Church relation, and baptism, as the children of parents who are both heathen. But now are they *holy*—that is, received, or allowed to come, as children whose parents are both Christian. But received to what? Not

simply as objects of care and attention, for heathen children are thus received; but received in some way, and to something that is refused to children whose parents are both heathen. It can only mean, to a visible relation to the Church, which relation could not be enjoyed without baptism. Here, then, Paul is in with his Lord and Peter, in using words on this question highly calculated to mislead, if infants were rejected from baptism.

The Baptists also attack this text. And they have two ways in which they endeavour to evade its force. First. One class of them says, The apostle means by, "Else were your children *unclean*"—you must put them away with the unbelieving companion. The second class says, The apostle means, Else were your children *illegitimate*. We would remind the reader that both these explanations are not true, as they do not agree together. As to the first mode of evading this text, we observe, that the explanation is forced and unnatural. The question is not, What shall be done with the children? But, What shall be done with an unbelieving companion? And further, there could be no more propriety in the children following the *unbelieving* parent, than the other, as the child is equally allied to both. As to the second effort to turn away the point of

this text by rendering it illegitimate, it is an outrage on the words of the passage. The terms which are rendered "legitimate" and "illegitimate," have no such meaning anywhere else in any author, either sacred or profane. Of course "the rendering is a sheer invention,—the effort of a subtle wit to extricate itself from an unpleasant difficulty." It is impossible that those to whom the apostle wrote should understand him to mean so. It would be just as much to the point, "and no greater license to render the words, Else were your children *cripples*, but now are they *sound*."

But there is another difficulty. It makes the apostle reason as badly as themselves, and presents him as proving the lawfulness of a marriage from the legitimacy of the children. This certainly is not the way marriages are usually proved legal.

The groundless criticism of the Baptists being removed, this passage is left to give its testimony in favour of the religious privileges which the Church granted to the children of pious parents.

(5.) If infants were not baptized by the apostles, in common with adults, the history the Scriptures give of different cases of baptisms is highly calculated to mislead the mind on this subject.

Acts xvi, 14, 15, gives an account of the baptism of Lydia and her *household*: "And when

she was baptized, and her *household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me*" (not us) "faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

Ah! says a Baptist, I am posted up on that point: "There were no children there;" "They were all adults;" "They were journeymen-dyers;" "Lydia was a maiden lady." Astonishing! Where did our Baptist friends learn all these things? They must certainly have a *different Bible* from the common version. But we must try this case by the testimony of our old Bible, after all. And what does it say of this case? Simply: "When she was baptized, and her *household*." These adults and dyers are brought in to embarrass a plain case. Strip the case, then, of all these far-fetched appendages, and what appears clearly set forth in this history? First. Lydia was baptized. Secondly. Her household were baptized. These two facts are distinctly stated. Now, as there is no evidence that this *household* were adults, but the circumstances strongly indicate the contrary, was it not manifestly careless for an apostle thus to write, if infants were not to be baptized, especially when we consider that all knew the relation that infants had sustained to the Church in time past? But if we consider that infants were at this time

to be excluded from the Church and her ordinance,—which was the case if they were not baptized,—surely, there is a carelessness in the wording of this history which would not be allowed in a common school-boy. The phraseology is highly calculated to mislead. Abraham and his house were circumcised. Lydia and her house were baptized. These ordinances stand on the same promise. We know there were infants in the first. Were there none in the last?

The record of the baptism of the jailer's family, (Acts xvi, 33,) and that of Stephanas, (1 Cor. i, 16,) are two other cases of like import. The Baptists, of course, say there were no infants in either of these houses. But the great majority of the Church have thought differently; and if infants were not baptized by the apostles, these passages with others have deceived many. Was it the design of the apostles on this question to mislead and deceive the people? One such text, standing alone in the word of God, would arrest the attention of the candid reader, and he would pause and ask himself the question, Were not infants baptized in this house? But when we consider the identity of the Church, and her practice of receiving infants, in common with adults, down to the very time of these apostles, and that always when the children of believing parents were re-

ferred to, they treated the subject just as we should expect they would if infants were still received as of old, and in their reports they mention the case of baptizing a household: not simply one, but a number. In this view these household baptisms come into this argument with a strength of evidence that cannot be set aside. The practice of the Church, from Abraham, is a standing comment on these cases. And was there ever a greater outrage on the candour of an enlightened people than the often-repeated declaration of the Baptists, "There were no children in those houses?" Had there been no Church until the time of the apostles, even then their words and actions would carry a majority of the people for infant baptism. But when their words and actions are viewed, as they must be, by the light of the Church's practice for two thousand years, there should be but one view on this subject. But the Baptists say, all in these houses were believers. And the reader can but know, that this on the part of the Baptists is a work of necessity. They must either make this point or give up their Church. But how do they show this? Answer: First, by the assertion, "There were no infants there." This, of course, is a strong hold, as it is an *argument* that all of them, laymen and ministers, can alike use.

Secondly, by *assertion*. Mr. Carson, page 183, says these households "must be believers because the apostles had no authority to baptize others." Page 181 the doctor says also, "If I were assured that there were infants in every one of the households, I should with equal confidence deny that they were baptized." This only shows that the Bible has but little power over some men when it opposes their creed.

Luke says the jailer "was baptized, he *and all his* straightway." Mr. Carson says if he were assured there were infants in this house, he would deny that they were baptized. The doctor certainly takes strong ground. He would not believe the Bible if it opposed his creed. I hope there are but few of this spirit. Let us reject Mr. Carson, and believe St. Luke. The effort of the Baptists to show from the texts themselves that these households were all adult believers is ineffectual; and is a manifest endeavour to turn aside the plain common-sense view of these passages. And even if it could be proved that in one of the houses, or in all, there were no children, even then, the Baptists themselves must admit, it was a loose way to announce the fact of their baptisms, as it has to a very great extent produced the impression that infants were, in those houses, baptized. These cases then, have a strong bearing in favour of in-

fant baptism. Their agreement with that practice in which we are sure infants were included, I refer to the practice of Abraham and the Jews with respect to circumcision. This agreement may be considered: First. In the principle which led to the practice. Circumcision was founded on this promise of God, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed." Baptism proceeds on this, that "the promise is unto you and your children;" and in this they are both alike. Secondly. In the practice itself. When Abraham received circumcision, his household were circumcised with him; so also when the jailer was baptized all his were baptized likewise. Now, when we discern two cases alike in principle and practice, and are sure that infants were intended in one, we then very naturally are led to conclude, that infants must be intended in the other.

This is the view which naturally suggests itself to the mind. Any other view is gathered up by efforts to avoid infant baptism. And so long as these household baptisms stand recorded in the word of God, in the light of these antecedents, which have been presented in the preceding pages, so long will the unprejudiced readers of the Scriptures see in them a strong testimony for infant baptism.

If infants, then, were not baptized by the apos-

tles, in common with adults, the history the Scriptures give of different cases of baptisms is highly calculated to mislead the mind on this subject.

(6.) We find infant baptism received in the Church without opposition, at so early a period as to render it impossible, in the nature of things, that it should have attained such universal practice, unless it came from Christ and his apostles.

In presenting this argument, it is proper to observe, that "some of the apostles were spared to the Church a long time, and the interval between the last of them and the earliest of the fathers was very brief." Luke lived until about the year 70; and John until about the year 100. So that the custom of the apostolic Church must have been well established before the last of the apostles went to his reward, and if infant baptism was practised in the Church any time during the first century, it had their sanction. *Justin Martyr* was born before John died, and about forty years after the death of the apostle he published his first Apology for the Christians, in which he says: "Many persons of both sexes, some sixty, some seventy years old, were made disciples to Christ from childhood." This passage is admitted by the best Baptist writers to be genuine. Our only business is, therefore, to find out its meaning. The Baptists say it does not refer to infant bap-

tism. This is no more than we should expect; for they having endeavoured to turn aside the words of the apostles, what could Justin Martyr expect?

They have two ways of disposing of this passage:—

1. That the phrase “made disciples” does not mean to baptize. But in what other way were these children *made* disciples? What is the external sign of discipleship? All will agree that it is baptism. Then allow that these children were baptized, and you have them *made* disciples by applying to them the outward sign of discipleship. But the Baptists answer, They were made disciples by teaching. Allowing for a moment that all these children were large enough to be taught, we will ask the Baptists, if teaching alone makes disciples? If so, what is the office of baptism? And why are you so strenuous on this question, and reject all unbaptized persons from the communion, if they are disciples without baptism? I think the Baptists had better take this explanation back.

2. But they have another way with this text. “From childhood,” they say, does not mean from infancy: these children were like those Peter addressed—“large boys and girls.” Then, of course, they were baptized, and teaching alone did not

answer. But this is a forced criticism ; for ἐκ παιδων, rendered "from childhood," is the same word Mark uses (ix, 36) for the child that our Saviour took in his arms ; much smaller, we presume, than the Baptists would be willing to baptize.

The only rational conclusion, then, is, that the persons referred to by Justin were baptized in their infancy, and thus "made disciples to Christ;" especially as we know that Paul baptized some infants, about that time, in the household of Lydia, the jailer, and of Stephanas.

Irenæus, one of the early fathers of the Church, was born about the time of Justin Martyr. He refers to this subject thus : "Christ came to save all persons by himself ; all, I say, who by him are *regenerated* unto God ; *infants*, and little ones, and youths, and elder persons." *Wall. Inf. Bap.*, vol. i, ch. 3.

This passage is also admitted by the Baptists as genuine ; and hence our only inquiry will be, What does it mean ? The term *infants* occurring in the passage, puts it out of the reach of the common explanation that the Baptists give all this class of texts—that the children were all grown to maturity. Therefore the only question to be settled in this passage is, to determine the meaning of the phrase "*regenerated unto God*." It would seem a little unnatural to say of "in-

fants" and "little ones" that they were *regenerated* in the same sense that "youths" and "elder persons" are, if we use the term *regenerated* in the sense of conversion, or the "new birth." But if we use it in the sense of dedicating persons to God by baptism, as the fathers certainly did, the passage is plain and the expression natural. Irenæus constantly uses this term in this sense. Speaking of the commission, he says: "When our Lord gave his disciples the power of *regenerating* unto God, he said unto them, Go teach all nations, *baptizing* them." Here there can be no mistake as to the meaning of the term regenerate; it was done by baptism. Justin uses the term in the same sense: "They are conducted by us to a place where there is water, and are there *regenerated* in the same manner in which we were regenerated; for they are then *washed* in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost."—*Hall on Bap.*, p. 175.

If, then, Irenæus used the term regenerated in the above passage in the sense he and his brethren commonly used it, and every consideration seems to favour this view, then we have Irenæus testifying to the baptism of "*infants*" and "little ones." Now, by such as say, If they knew there were infants in the jailer's house, they would not

believe they were baptized, we may suppose this testimony will be readily set aside; for when men are prepared to discredit an inspired evangelist, they would not long feel embarrassed with the testimony of the fathers. But by such persons as read with no other desire than to know the truth on this subject, will be seen in the "regenerated infants" of Irenæus a manifest reference to infant baptism.

Tertullian, in the second century, mentions infant baptism. The character of this man is well understood by the Church. "He ran into all manner of vagaries of doctrine;" and among other things, held that baptism took away sins—as some branches of the Baptists hold at the present day. This man advised the delay of baptism, not only to infants, but to adults also. It is said "he opposed infant baptism." So, in the same manner, he opposed adult baptism; as he advised a delay in both cases, on the ground that he thought sins committed after baptism were more aggravated than those before. Speaking of infants he says: "For what need, *except in case of necessity*, that their godfathers should be in danger? because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may be deceived by a child's proving of a wicked disposition." Again: "What need their innocent age make such haste

to the forgiveness of sins" (by baptism).—*Hall on Bap.*, p. 176.

The Baptists, on the testimony of Tertullian, admit the genuineness of the text; and also, that he refers to infant baptism. "But they say he opposed it." On this testimony of Tertullian we observe:—

(1.) That the controversy on the question of infant baptism in the second century shows that it *existed* at that time in the Church; and also the arguments used by Tertullian show, that the question was, of the propriety of infant baptism, and not of its right: for he allowed it "*in case of necessity.*" This involves the right, which Tertullian admitted, and with him it was only a question of time. If the children were sick, or likely to die, then give them baptism.

(2.) The manner in which Tertullian discussed this question shows its antiquity—that it came from the apostles; for certainly if it had originated in the Church since the apostles' time, Tertullian must have known it; for not quite one hundred years had intervened since John's death. Now to suppose that Tertullian would so warmly controvert this question, and talk only of "god-fathers," and the danger of the children getting wicked, as also that there was no need of such haste, &c., when there was an argument of over-

whelming power at hand, is to suppose that this great controversialist was little else than a novice. Why did he not say, There need be no haste in baptizing infants; there is nothing binding in this institution; it is an innovation upon the ordinance of baptism; it is not yet fifty years old, and it not only infringes upon the practice of the ordinance of baptism, but upon the principle itself. "Faith precedes baptism in all cases." This is according to the commission. Can any living man believe that all this is true, and the great Tertullian, hard pressed by his opponents, contented himself with talking only about "godfathers" and godmothers? The Baptists hold that infant baptism was at this period just beginning to come into the Church. Who proposed this great innovation? They cannot tell. But Tertullian, the only honest man in the Church, and he a heretic, lifted up his voice against it, and instead of crying out "innovation," he said only that it would put the "godfathers" in danger.

Origen, in the third century, writing on the doctrine of original sin, speaks also of infant baptism:—

"Infants *are baptized* for the forgiveness of sins." "What is the reason why the baptism of the Church, which is given for the remission of

sins, is, by the usage of the Church, *given also to infants?*”—*Lord King*, p. 196. *Hall on Bap.* 177.

Cyprian, and a council of sixty bishops, gave their opinion of infant baptism in the year 253. Lord King states the occasion of this council thus: “A certain country bishop, called Fidus, had some scruples, not concerning the baptism of infants, but concerning the time of their baptism, whether they might be baptized before the second or third day after their birth, or before the eighth day, as it was observed with respect to circumcision under the Mosaical economy, the reasons or grounds for which his scruples he proposed to this synod.”—P. 197.

The following is an extract from the answer of this council: “Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is our opinion, that from *baptism* and the grace of God, who is merciful, kind, and benign to all, none ought to be prohibited by us, which as it is to be observed and followed with respect to all, so especially with respect to infants and those just born.”—P. 202.

On this passage I will only remark, that those who can believe that this convention of sixty bishops—the lights of the Church at that early period—all met in a holy council with such a one as Cyprian at their head, and all united to establish a falsehood, without one honest man to

oppose it, must have lost much of that charity, without which they are as a "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." It must also be observed, that the question on which this council acted, was not the right of infant baptism, for on this question even Fidus was not in doubt; but he was in doubt whether it were right to deviate from the ancient practice of the Church, and consecrate infants before they were eight days old. That this question should be suggested for consideration in the Church at that early period seems very natural. Believing, as they did, that baptism succeeded circumcision, which was by law administered to infants at eight days old, it was perfectly natural to inquire if the same law was not to be observed in respect to baptism; and the fact that this question was discussed and answered by this council of bishops, without any reference to the right of infants after the eighth day to receive baptism, shows clearly that infant baptism was universally received by the Church at that time. Any conclusion drawn from the case, contrary to this, must be forced and unnatural.

Pelagius lived three hundred years after the apostles. He rejected the doctrine of original sin, and this led to much controversy among the early fathers. Augustine says of the Pelagians:

“Since they grant *that infants must be baptized*, as not being able to resist the authority of the Church, which was doubtless delivered by our Lord and his apostles, they must also grant that they stand in need of the benefits of the Mediator.” Again he says: “The custom of our Mother Church in *baptizing infants* must not be disregarded, nor accounted needless, nor believed to be anything else than an ordinance *delivered to us from the apostles*.”—*Hall on Baptism*, page 178.

“Why are infants baptized for the remission of sins, if they have none?” “With this argument Pelagius was much embarrassed, and had recourse to a variety of evasions in order to escape from it.”—*Dr. Pond on Bap.*, p. 107.

Now why did not Pelagius just say: Infant baptism is an innovation; it has no binding authority. And being an institution of man, so recently introduced, it can have no authority in the argument. This, every one sees, would have been a full and complete answer to all these difficulties; and living so near the apostles, if infant baptism had been an innovation he must have known it. How long would any of the Baptists of the present day be pressed with an argument that rested on infant baptism? But it seems that Pelagius was not able to resist the force of truth at that time, and therefore left it for men

of a much later date to deny the divinely-appointed institution of infant baptism; for Pelagius says: "Baptism ought to be administered to infants with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adults." And again: "Men slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." "*I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.*"—*Dr. Pond on Bap.*, pp. 107, 108.

Quotations from the fathers on this subject might be much extended; but desiring to discuss this question as briefly as the nature of the subject will allow, we shall rest the argument on the testimony of the fathers already quoted.

Justin Martyr speaks of persons living in his day who must have received infant baptism under the direction of *Peter, James, and John*; they being, at the time Justin wrote, "some sixty, some seventy years old." Common candour must admit that those infants "regenerated unto God" were baptized in infancy, for *Irenæus* could mean nothing else by this expression. *Tertullian* taught infant baptism as well as adult, if the child or adult was about to die; but recommended, in each case, that baptism should be delayed, that the sins of a life might be washed away by their baptism; (for it seems he, like some classes of the Baptists of the present day, held that water

baptism was a saving ordinance;) and therefore was no more opposed to the principle of infant baptism, than to the baptism of adults.

Origen says the Church "baptized infants for the forgiveness of sins," and that this authority was received from the apostles.

Augustine speaks of infant baptism being of such authority in the Church that it could not be resisted—that is, no man could deny it. And Pelagius says infants ought to be baptized; and when he was charged of rejecting infant baptism because he denied the doctrine of original sin, he considered it a slander, and said he "never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants." He must have known of Tertullian, and perhaps refers to him in the word "heretic;" and his testimony in this case shows that Tertullian only recommended the delay of baptism, as above explained. But the Baptists teach that infant baptism came into the Church about that time as an innovation; and yet Pelagius says he "never heard of any who denied baptism to infants." If infant baptism was an innovation, who proposed it? In what year was it introduced? Was there any opposition to its introduction into the Church? If so, who opposed it? There never has been an answer given to one of these questions; and yet the Baptists

ask the people to believe that infant baptism is of human device, and forced upon the Church contrary to the command of our Lord. Let the reader judge for himself.

III. *The objections to infant baptism brought by its opponents are groundless.*

OBJECTION I.

There is no express command in the Scriptures for baptizing infants; therefore, infants ought not to be baptized.

By the phrase "express command," in this objection, the Baptists mean that it is nowhere said in the Scriptures, in so many words, "Infants must be baptized," or, "Thou shalt baptize infants." And because it is not thus "expressed," infants are to be refused baptism. This objection is designed to exclude all inferential testimony, however strong such evidence may be, and make the subject of infant baptism depend on a certain form of words of their own suggestion. Baptism, they say, is a positive institution; and all who have a right to its advantages must be especially named in the law of the ordinance; and, therefore, no inferential testimony can be allowed in the case. And as infants are not named in the great commission, they have no right to baptism. I think I have given above the view the Baptists

take of this objection. And I will now offer the following observations upon it:—

(1.) The objection is *arrogant* and *dogmatical*. It assumes to say to the Almighty how he must teach the people; and unless he expresses himself on certain subjects in a particular form of words, they will not regard him. This is the spirit of the objection. The foregoing pages present some of the evidence which God has given for infant baptism. But all this passes for nothing with the Baptists. And because God did not say in in so many words, “Thou shalt baptize infants,” they reject them from the ordinance; though such rejection should involve the greatest absurdities, and leave Christ and the apostles liable to the charge of misleading the people, whenever they referred to the case of infants; which is certainly the case if infants were not baptized. The arrogance of this objection is enough to destroy it: for, “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?”

(2.) This objection is also degrading to men; for it assumes that men cannot understand the Almighty unless he speaks in express words and in short sentences. Consequently very much of the teaching of the Scriptures is altogether useless. Its allegories and parables, according to this Baptist objection, are all very much out of place.

The people can understand nothing but express words. But if any one says the objection does not mean this, we ask, What does it mean? For certainly if men can understand facts and circumstances, and draw conclusions from them sufficient to make out a case, why bind the Almighty to express words, as in the case of this objection?

(3.) The principle of this objection is false, and the Baptists themselves reject it in certain cases. The Baptists reject infant baptism because God did not expressly say, "Thou shalt baptize infants:" for in positive institutions, they say, nothing is to be inferred, but everything to be expressed.

Now we have three institutions in the Church resting on positive law. The *Sabbath* is the first. But the law says the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath: This thou shalt remember and keep holy. But our Baptist friends, as well as ourselves, keep for the Sabbath the first day of the week. We can assign a reason for so doing from the facts and circumstances connected with the resurrection of Christ and the practice of the apostolic Church. But the Baptists have no right to do this. Their objection forbids to reason on the positive institutions of the Church. They must have an "express" command on the subject, as in the case of infant baptism. But here the Baptists condemn their own objection, and prove

the first day of the week to be the Sabbath, just as we do, from facts and circumstances. And herein is their inconsistency. They contend for the principle of the above objection to-day, in arguing on infant baptism; but they abandon it to-morrow, in arguing on the Christian Sabbath. A principle which must be abandoned in contending for the truth, is only used in contending for error. But this is what the Baptists use in opposing infant baptism.

The *sacrament* of the Lord's supper is another positive institution. Nothing, according to the Baptist objection, is to be inferred on this subject, but all must be expressed. How then does it happen that our Baptist friends admit their females to the Lord's table; have they an express command, in so many words, for so doing? Certainly they have not. Here again they abandon their own objection, and prove the right of females to the communion, from facts and circumstances. They say women are capable of communion with God,—are proper subjects of baptism, &c.,—and, therefore, ought to receive the sacrament. This is all true; but you, as a Baptist, have abandoned your great principle in order to say it. Your principle is, No inferences on positive institutions; and yet you have inferred, from the character of women, that they are proper persons for the Lord's supper.

The third institution of the Church is *baptism*. Here the Baptists say, No inferences ; we want “ express ” words. Infants are not to be received to baptism because the Lord did not say, “ Infants are to be baptized.” This is the position of the Baptists on the three positive institutions of the Church. They practise differently. They claim on baptism, that there can be no inferences on positive institutions, but everything must be expressed in so many words, and with this they undertake to reject infants from baptism : but passing from baptism to the Sabbath, and the sacrament, they deny their own objection, and by inference keep the first for the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath ; and by inference admit females to the Lord’s table. We think, then, the objection is groundless, for it is pronounced false twice out of three times by the Baptists themselves.

OBJECTION II.

The Scriptures require faith and repentance before baptism : but infants can neither believe nor repent : therefore infants ought not to be baptized.

In support of this objection, the Baptists refer to the great commission of Christ to his disciples, as well as to other scriptures, where faith and repentance stand before baptism. This objection constitutes the stronghold of the Baptists. To it

Dr. Carson "flies in every time of trouble." So confident was he in the strength of this objection, that he says in his work on baptism, page 181, "If I were assured that there were infants in every one of the households, I should with equal confidence deny that they were baptized." Luke says of the jailer, "*he was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*" Yet Mr. Carson had so much confidence that faith and repentance preceded baptism in all cases, that "*express*" testimony of a sacred historian could not convince him to the contrary. That this objection should deceive, and lead astray some persons, I do not wonder; but that men of thought and study should be deceived by it is certainly astonishing. A logician would perceive at once that this objection violates the great principle of sound reasoning, that "there should not be more in the conclusion than was in the premises." This objection has adults understood in the premises, and infants expressed in the conclusion. This is enough to destroy the objection in the mind of an impartial judge of sound reasoning. I would remark again, that this objection should be received with caution, inasmuch as it seems designedly indefinite. When it says faith and repentance are required before baptism, does it mean in all cases? If it does, we deny it. If it does not,

then it has no force against infant baptism, because their case might be the one where faith and repentance were not required. The objection then, we understand to mean, that in all cases the Scriptures require faith and repentance before baptism. In this sense we deny it, and will prove it false by the baptism of our Lord.

Our Lord was baptized; his character precludes the idea of either faith or repentance, and therefore our Lord's baptism was either wrong, or the objection is false. But our Lord's baptism could not be wrong. This objection, therefore, assists a falsehood. If the Baptists say, to relieve the case, that our Lord had no sin to repent of, and being the object of faith himself, could not believe in the commonly-received sense of that word, we answer, so it is with infants. They, like their Lord, have no actual sins to repent of, and are incapable of faith. So the baptism of our Lord shows clearly two things: first, that this objection is false; and second, that the absence of faith and repentance in an infant is no obstacle in the way of his baptism.

It is evident to all, that any argument, the principle of which opposes a truth, must itself be false. That this objection opposes established truths may be further seen by applying it to the circumcision of infants: circumcision bound to

the keeping of the law. "Ye must be circumcised and keep the law." "Every man who is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law." Now, everybody knows that an infant could not do the whole law, nor any part of the law. They therefore ought not to have been circumcised. But a Baptist may say God commanded it. This we grant, and his command shows that it was right, and that this objection is wrong; for this objection opposes the circumcision of infants, which God has pronounced right.

This argument would have been just as good in the mouth of a Jew, against infant circumcision, as it is in the mouth of a Baptist against infant baptism; therefore the objection is false. But it has more power against the salvation of infants than against their baptism: for our Lord does *not* say, He that believeth not, shall not be baptized; but he does say, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Therefore, the objection is much stronger against infant salvation than it is against infant baptism.

Let us set these objections down, side by side, and we ask the reader to look at them and decide in his own mind, how the Baptists can reject infants from baptism by this objection, and at the same time, in opposition to this objection, admit their salvation.

(1.) "The Scriptures require faith and repentance before baptism : but infants can neither believe nor repent : therefore infants ought not to be baptized." And also,

(2.) The Scriptures require faith and repentance before salvation : but infants can neither believe, nor repent : therefore infants ought not to be saved.

Nów, these arguments are equal in all their parts ; they must therefore stand or fall together. The man that rejects infant baptism by the first, must also reject infant salvation by the last. For a man to receive the first, and thereby reject infant baptism ; and reject the second, and admit infant salvation, is to subject himself even to the ridicule of children. The Baptists admit the salvation of infants, and thereby reject their own objection.

The facts in this case are simply these. The Scriptures require faith and repentance of adult sinners, and therefore those adult sinners who have not faith and repentance ought not to be baptized. But to say, because the Scriptures require faith and repentance of adult sinners, therefore infants ought not to be baptized, is a burlesque on logic, and an outrage on the word of God. This objection, then, is false in fact, as it proves against the baptism of Christ, against

infant circumcision, and against infant salvation. Therefore it must be rejected, as it is a groundless objection to infant baptism.

OBJECTION III.

“Infant baptism takes away the right of the child.”

Does it take away the right of the child any more than did circumcision? In this there is an exact parallel; and if the one is wrong, so was the other. But what right does it take away? Do the Baptists answer, The right to say whether they will be baptized or not? We reply, that no person has any such right. God has commanded “every one” to be baptized—“you and your children”—and therefore no person has a right to reject baptism; and what a person has not, cannot be taken from him. Do the Baptists say: The right to choose the mode of receiving the ordinance? I presume not; for they take this right themselves not only from infants, but from even adults. The Baptists take a very different view of this subject from what was taken of it in the day of the ancient worthies. Then the child that was not presented to God in the ordinance of his Church was cut off, and thereby lost his rights; but more latterly they have found out, that to give a child the sign of his relation

to the same old Church takes away his rights! It is a pity Tertullian had not known that; he might have set it down as a reason for the delay of baptism in the case of infants in a healthy state. But I suppose the old man never thought of it. Do the Baptists say: The right of obeying God in receiving baptism? We answer, that the command to be baptized is given to unbaptized persons. But those who have been baptized have not this command, and consequently are free; so that in the case of persons baptized in infancy, God is obeyed from the beginning, and to such God never says, Be baptized over again. But I cannot say so much for the Baptists. They often say it.

OBJECTION IV.

“Persons baptized in infancy can never *know* themselves baptized.”

This objection to infant baptism is often urged with great effect. The whole force of this objection rests in the idea of *knowing* the fact. If the validity of Christian baptism rested in a *personal knowledge* of the fact, there perhaps would be some force in the objection. But this is not the case. It has a higher sanctity than our personal knowledge. But the same objection could have been brought against infant circumcision. To this

it may be said that circumcision left its mark. Very true ; but the same kind of a mark might be made in the flesh from other considerations. It might arise from disease or accident ; and the simple fact of their having the mark in the flesh would only be an item of evidence in the case. But for them to *know* the fact of their circumcision from personal knowledge was as much impossible as in the case of infant baptism. They could have one additional item of evidence, but even that would not reduce the case to personal knowledge ; and in this the point of the objection consists. Therefore we say, the same objection would have been equally strong against infant circumcision. But again : this objection would set aside all knowledge which did not come under our own observation, within the time of our memory ; for it asks us to reject our infant baptism because we have no *personal* knowledge of the fact. By this objection we should reject all history of the past, together with the word of God and all its doctrines. And even Jesus Christ must be rejected ; for none of us have seen him personally. If this objection is to be received, no man knows his own age, nor his own name, nor the place of his birth, nor even his own mother. I ask a Baptist how he knows his age ? He answers that his parent told him ; and I suppose he would

be offended if I should "*knowingly*" say, You do not know certainly. He might think it called in question the veracity of his parents, and cast a reflection on the honour of the family. But he can say to a person baptized in infancy, You do not know certainly that you are baptized. It is to be feared that our Baptist friends are often more anxious concerning the knowledge of water baptism, than for a personal knowledge of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Inasmuch, then, as this objection involves the necessity of rejecting the common facts which regulate society, and also the rejection of gospel truth, on the receiving of which our salvation depends, it certainly can have no force against infant baptism; "for that which proves too much is good for nothing."

OBJECTION V.

Infant baptism serves to fill the Church with unconverted persons, and thereby to make the Church consist of a carnal membership and a corrupt ministry.

In support of this objection the Baptists refer to the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and some other Churches that have lost the spirituality of the gospel; and in this manner the objection is made to produce an effect on the unthinking. But, allowing for a moment, this

objection to be true, the reader can but discover that it reflects greatly on the character of the great Master-builder, as he appointed an ordinance in his Church which serves to quench the fires of spirituality; for certainly the baptism of infants could no more produce this effect in the Church than infant circumcision; and if God knew that it was opposed to spirituality, why did he appoint it? But this objection assumes what is not true. It attributes evils to infant baptism which manifestly belong to other causes. As for instance:—

(1.) The placing too much dependence on the outward ordinances of religion. If a Church hold water baptism to be regeneration, and take the outward sign for the thing signified, then it becomes filled with unconverted members, with a carnal and corrupt ministry; and it makes no difference whether this Church baptizes infants or adults only—the result is the same. Whether it be by sprinkling or immersion, it changes not the case. But is the holy institution of baptism in the fault for all this? Certainly not. It is its abuse, in placing too much dependence on an outward ordinance. We are perfectly willing the reader should be his own judge what Churches place the most dependence on water baptism. Some branches of

the Baptists hold water baptism as a saving ordinance; others allow no communion without it; and with all the Baptist Churches, baptism is the great leading idea. I am free to admit that some of the Pædobaptist Churches are too much like some Baptists, and place too much dependence on baptism, and rest too much on outward ordinances. But I do not hold baptism responsible, either in the one case or the other; they alike lower the standard of the gospel, content themselves with the letter, and forget the spirit. "It is the spirit that giveth life." Let the Church follow the example of our Lord and say, "Ye must be born again;" and insist upon the spiritual work of grace in the heart, as the only means of communion with God here, and of heaven hereafter. This will remove the evil complained of in the objection.

OBJECTION VI.

Infant baptism is a relic of Popery, which the Protestant Church has not fully shaken off.

This objection is nothing in itself, and yet it produces its effect on certain persons. Perhaps there can scarcely be found a more manifest effort to destroy a truth, without assigning a reason, than is seen in this objection. It is a sort of "mad-dog" cry, used by many of the opponents of infant

baptism, to bring this institution into disrepute with the people.

But there is one thing I wish the Baptists would explain, and that is, how infant baptism could cause the Roman Church to fall away from truth and spirituality, and then, the Roman Church, in her fallen state, originate infant baptism? The falling away of Rome is said to be on account of infant baptism introducing carnal members into the Church, and then with a view to give infant baptism a corrupt origin, it is called a "relic of Popery." Now I would advise the Baptists to abandon one or the other of these objections. It will make no difference which, for one is as true as the other. But to retain both, and urge them against infant baptism, looks like a zeal which is not according to knowledge. But the Baptists admit infant baptism in the Church within two hundred years from our Lord, and Popery, as such, had no existence until about the sixth century. So, by the admission of the Baptists themselves, this *relic* of Popery is about four hundred years older than the Pope. But this objection, perhaps, is used more than almost any other against infant baptism, notwithstanding it asserts what is positively false.

OBJECTION VII.

It is claimed by the Baptists, that persons sometimes become dissatisfied with their infant baptism, and are therefore embarrassed by this institution.

In reply to this objection we would observe, that though we should admit all the objection states, it would not follow that infant baptism is wrong therefore. For the fact that some persons renounce their infant baptism, does not prove infant baptism wrong any more than Christianity is proved false because some persons renounce their religion. And as to the embarrassment, it certainly cannot be very great, as there are generally Baptist ministers ready to accommodate such persons, by repeating the ordinance in as *much* water as may be desired.

But of all the objections to infant baptism urged by the Baptists, this certainly is most to their discredit. The people know with what zeal the Baptists prosecute the work of opposing infant baptism. They preach against it in private and in public. Their books and newspapers are filled with ridicule, sarcasm, and sneers at this ordinance. Is it to be wondered at, and received as an evidence against infant baptism, when the Baptists succeed in gaining a convert? The great

wonder is that they lead off so few. Let the same effort be made by the same persons against any of the established doctrines of religion, and I venture to say they will lead as many astray as they do on infant baptism. Let them talk against regeneration, or the resurrection of the body, and their success will be equally great. But I suppose no Christian would therefore conclude against either of these established doctrines of the gospel. If our Baptist friends will hold their peace thus, their objection would soon die; but so long as they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, so long we may reasonably expect they can present here and there a lamb led away from the fold. This objection, then, carefully viewed, exhibits nothing so prominently as the disgrace of those who urge it

THE END.



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